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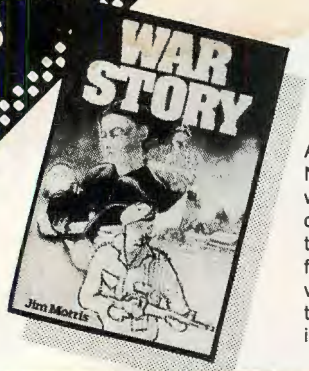

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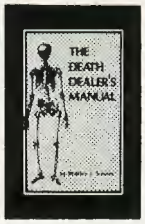

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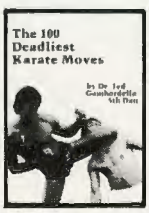

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EDITOR'S NOTE

WHEN Operation Velvet Hammer, an "official unofficial" private attempt to rescue Americans still being held in Southeast Asia, broke up in 1981, *Soldier Of Fortune* became embroiled in one of the most expensive, time-consuming projects it has ever undertaken.

SOF was asked to assist in the POW/MIA issue by some former Special Forces Vietnam Veterans who had resigned from Velvet Hammer because they decided the operation was amateurish — and had insufficient funds and intelligence. They came to SOF because they knew: 1) We had our own source of funds to pursue the story. 2) We would not under any circumstances take money from the families of the men missing in Southeast Asia, something which happened in Velvet Hammer and which disgusted some of the participants. 3) We were vitally interested since many of us are 'Nam veterans. 4) We had intelligence sources both here and abroad. 5) We had enough guts to go where the evidence led us and enough sense not to go where we couldn't produce.

There have been times when we regretted getting involved in the affair because of its deeply emotional nature and the frustrations brought about by our lack of success.

Along the way the story has taken SOF reporters all over America, to Paris, into Thailand for extensive periods of time and into northern Laos, where one of our agents had enough sense not to continue on into southwestern China.

We've had to wheel and deal with spooks, would-be spooks and some people who imagined they were spooks. We've dealt with Laotian warlords of varying degrees of loyalty and honesty, American politicians (not unlike the Laotian warlords), French Indochina veterans, the families of the men missing in Southeast Asia, guerrilla chieftains motivated by hatred of communism and love of money (particularly American dollars), Nationalist Chinese Kuomintang Army leftovers who now control parts of Thailand's northeastern border, shadowy American soldiers of fortune and misfortune, expatriate Americans living in Asia, agents of Pathet Lao officers who want out of Laos, agent provocateurs from the left, former Air America and CIA agents who settled down in Asia after the shooting stopped, former U.S. soldiers who didn't realize that they were "over the hill," and even one self-styled IRA gunrunner.

From the beginning there were two goals: Ascertain if there were any Americans still being held prisoner in Southeast Asia and, if so, try to effect their release.

To date, we have not reached either goal. But in our hearts, we still believe the communists are holding Americans against their will in Southeast Asia.

The whole story will appear in an SOF extra issue that will hit the newsstands 12 May. We will deal in detail with the highly publicized fiasco, Operation Lazarus, and Lt. Col. James G. "Bo" Gritz. Is he a national hero or a charlatan?

Don't miss it.

—Jim Graves

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SOF

JUNE/1983 VOL. 8, NO. 6

COVER: UNITA freedom fighter on patrol in Angola's bush. SOF correspondent Rick Venable's visit with Jonas Savimbi and his warriors at a camp in Cuando-Cubango Province – where UNITA is beginning to turn the tide on Russian-Cuban supported MPLA forces – begins on p. 46. Photo: Rick Venable

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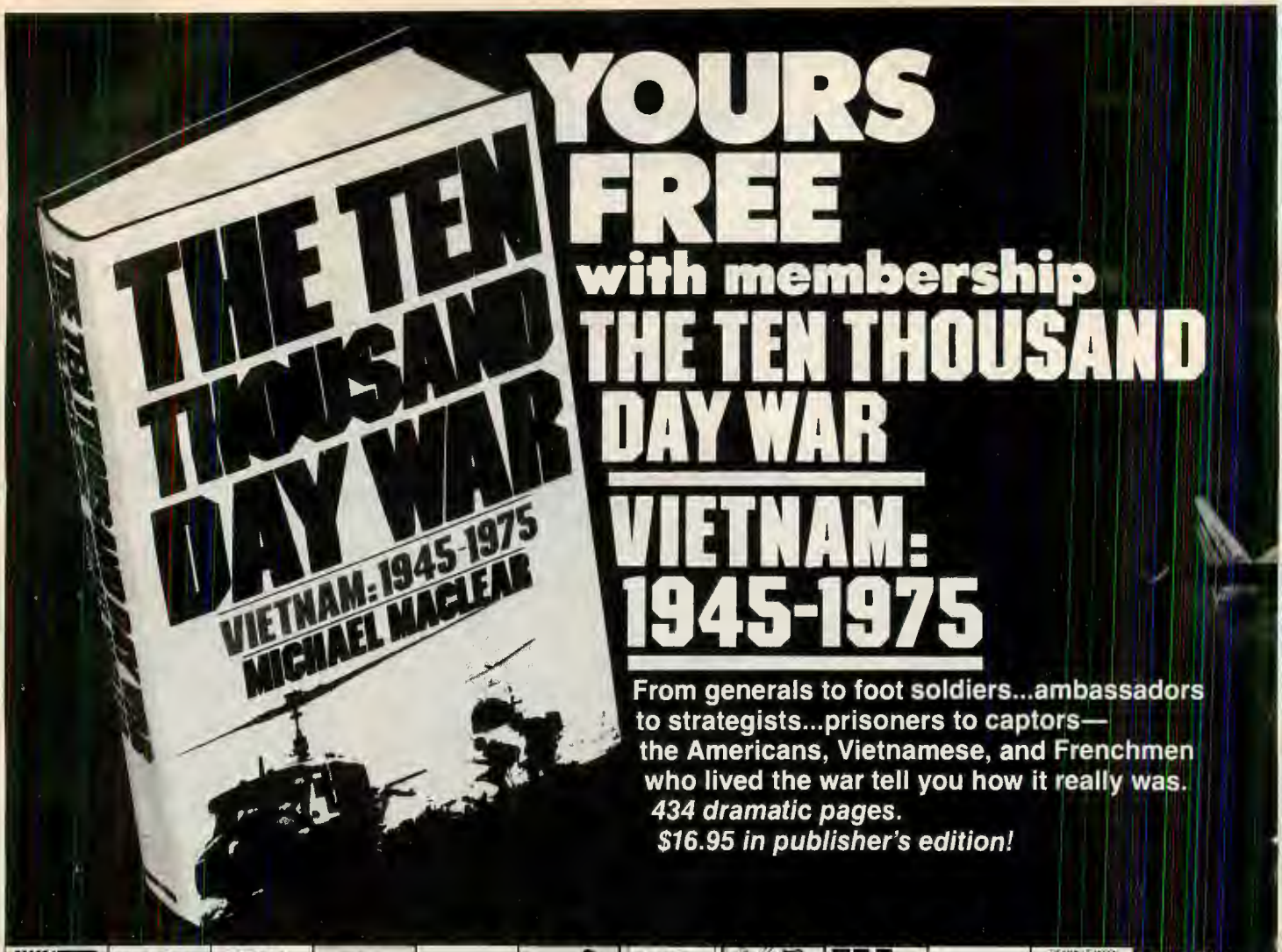

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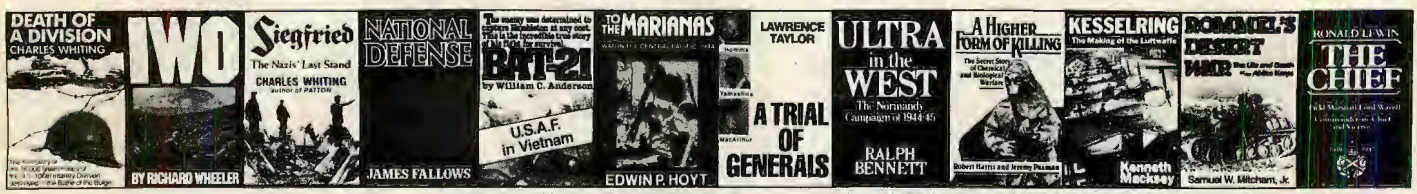

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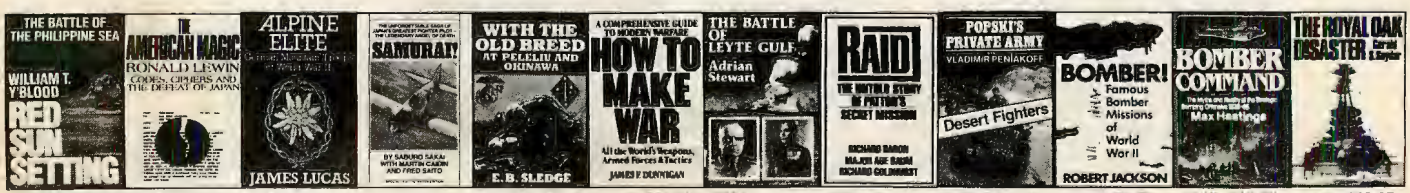

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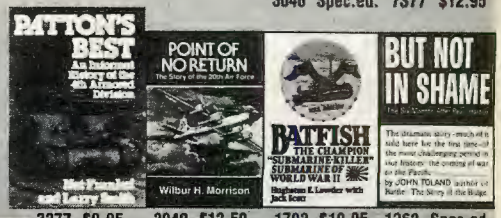

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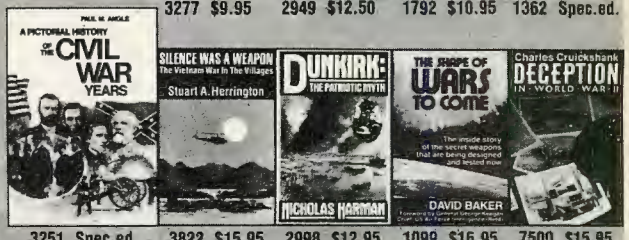

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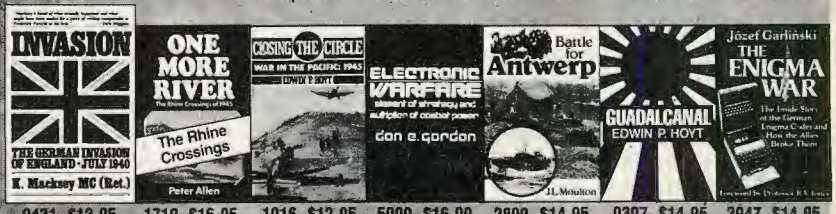

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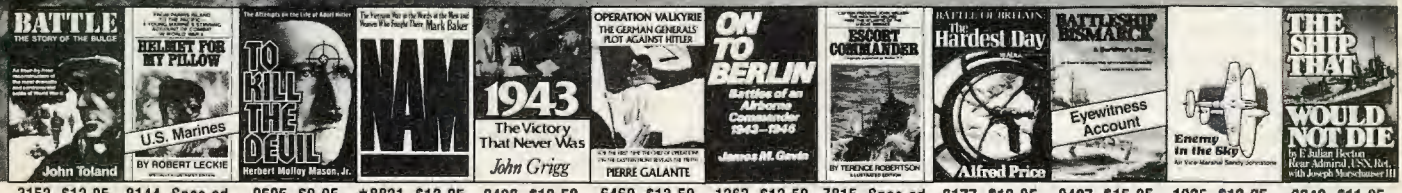

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FLAK

GRITZ, YOU BLEW IT. . .

Sirs:

I've enclosed a copy of an article in the *Los Angeles Times* about Operation Lazarus. You are probably familiar with some aspects of this fiasco.

I call it a fiasco not because of the motivation or purpose, but because the primary parties disclosed the operation to the press. Aside from being a tactical error, I have some distrust of the press at large. The wounds inflicted on the military from the sword wielded by the press run rather deep.

The operation and identity of the financial supporters, who for obvious or not-so-obvious reasons preferred anonymity, should not have been compromised. Now that the proverbial Pandora's Box has been opened, future attempts to rescue the POWs are greatly hampered. You can be sure that both Ivan and his lackeys have alerted the Viets to a possible snatch attempt. Our guys will now be guarded more closely and shuttled around more frequently. At the first sign of an attempt to free them, they will most certainly be the first KIA. The Viets would also mount one hell of a manhunt to assure that no POW or rescuer got away. That would destroy the bastards' claims that they are not holding any American soldiers — still.

I've thought about the logistics to pull off such a rescue operation. Without too much detail, you'd need: 1) Vietnam vet Special Forces-types — Green Beanies, Force Recons, SEALs, Hmongs or such tribesmen who know the lingo and the lay of the land (Los Angeles and Orange Counties alone have a great mixture); 2) a few in-house friendlies (about 15 to 20 men max, and carefully keep the Anglos out of sight) and 3) very good intel about the terrain, number and condition of POWs to be rescued (probably not more than five are at any one site), strength and location of Operating Forces (OPFORs).

Insertion: High Altitude, Low Opening (HALO) or inflatable boat commencing 10 to 15 klicks from the Area of Operations (any more than that increases time-to-target and detection).

Extraction: Having to fight your way out is unthinkable, especially considering the condition of POWs and any Wounded in Action (WIA). Terrain may preclude the landing of even a Short Takeoff or Landing (STOL) craft, so a copter with proper distance and lift capacity would be needed for flying Nap of Earth (NOE). Then you'd have to think about possible interception by MiGs and Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs). Once airborne, Thailand is the obvious destination and it's best to assume that Charlie has thought along those lines as well.

Enough of this. I do think that most of the guys involved had their hearts in the right places. I do support the idea and any rescue attempts but I strongly disagree with the disclosure of operations. I'll let someone else comment about the suspect and dismal arrangements of finances. Gritz, you blew it.

Anyway my friends, here's the check to renew my subscription. You do good work — I don't care what Ivan says.

Josef Johnson
Beverly Hills, California

SOF agrees with Mr. Johnson that Operation Lazarus was a fiasco. Being very familiar with the operation and many of the people involved, however, we disagree completely that its failure was caused by the publicity surrounding it. Conversely, its failure sparked the publicity: Not until after the rescue attempt had been aborted and all the personnel safe, was the story made public. It failed — as did Gritz' two previous plans, Operation Velvet Hammer and Grand Eagle — because of poor planning.

For a full account of the POW/MIA situation — including an extensive evaluation of all three Gritz rescue missions, and the unabridged operation plan for Lazarus — don't miss SOF's special POW/MIA issue coming to the newsstands May 12. Because it is an extra issue and not a monthly one, no copies will be mailed to subscribers. — The Eds.

MAD MIKE'S WIFE WRITES . . .

Sirs:

I am trying to keep the interest going on the wild geese patches and badges that you so kindly gave a great boost to (see Editor's Note, SOF, Oct. '82). Your readers' response was very good and I thank them for it.

We are putting out a beret badge, much smaller with a gold lurex thread in it to brighten it up. It will measure approximately two inches in diameter — the other is four inches. We are asking $7 for it, which includes a certificate and air mail postage. The book (Mike Hoare's *Congo Mercenary*) is still going for $12, but postage is surface mail and if anyone wants it air mailed it's a further $3 which they must include in the order. To order or for more information, contact the Mike Hoare Defense Fund, Box 441, Hilton, 3245, South Africa.

I am also sending you a great shot of one of our guys being acquitted — Charles Dukes, 28 years old and from America. I love the adulation on the

girl's face! Charlie was acquitted as he had been wounded during the action, and was under the influence of a pain-killing drug at the time of the alleged hijacking.

I'll keep you posted if anything happens, just in appreciation for the great hand you gave us earlier.

Phyllis Hoare
Hilton, South Africa

BOBBY POSTSCRIPT. . .

Sirs:

I'd like to add a postscript to the story, "May Buddha Bless Bobby," that ran in SOF's October '82 issue.

As I read the story, I didn't key on the freckles, light complexion or Special Forces connection. However, when I came to the part about the Long Island restaurant, bells started ringing. Unfortunately, the picture accompanying the article wasn't clear.

I took the SOF to Long Island and showed it to the owner of the restaurant where the former LLDB (Luc Long Dac Biet, Vietnam's Special Forces) guy

Continued on page 82

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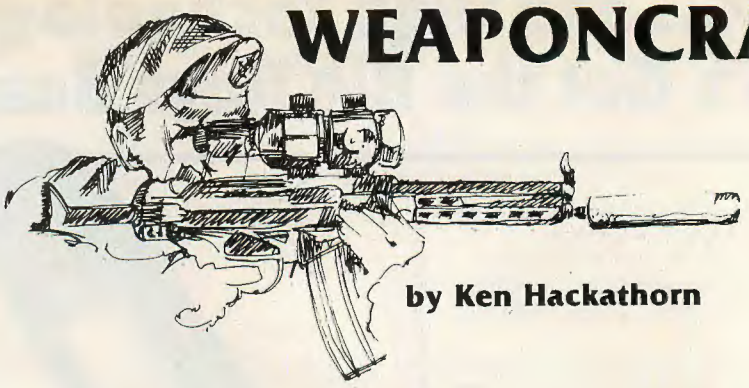

by Ken Hackathorn

Hackathorn's Survival Pick: 5.56mm Galil

THE vices and virtues of 5.56mm NATO as a battle rifle cartridge can be argued, but like it or not, we're stuck with it for the foreseeable future. Being a realist, I've planned my survival battery around the little bullet, and my favorite iron to shoot it with is the Galil.

Other gun-pundits cheer for high-tech rifles like the FA MAS or Steyr AUG, but proven designs and iron sights have my vote.

Israeli Military Industries makes the Galil Assault Rifle (AR) and the Galil Short Assault Rifle (SAR), but the design is basically Kalashnikov's. Altered to take the slightly longer and narrower — and much higher pressure — U.S.-designed micro-caliber cartridge, the action features the usual cast of AK characteristics: rotating lugged locking bolt, bolt-carrier and gas piston machined as a unit, and the distinctive long fire-selection/safety lever.

The cocking handle has been enlarged, knobbed for an easier grip and bent vertical to make it accessible to either hand. To make this piece easier to handle on either side, the safety and fire-selector lever is extended to the left side of the receiver, correcting the AK's tendency to be for right-handers only.

The Galil's stock sights are a heavily shielded aperture and hooded post, factory-set to 300 and 500 meters. These are backed up by folding luminous sights. This combination makes a sight-picture easy to acquire in the worst as well as the best light.

All the Galils come with a flash-hider that also serves as part of the bayonet mount, and one of the stiffest, strongest folding stocks around. This stock obviously was not designed for the civilian market, but it is surprisingly convenient for stuffing the rifle behind a truck seat or in a car trunk. Additionally, the ARM (Assault Rifle and Light Machine Gun) version is equipped with a bipod good enough for field or competition.

The Galil AR, ARM and SAR in both 5.56 NATO and 7.62 NATO are now imported into the U.S. by Magnum Research Inc., 2825 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418. The selective-fire versions are available for law enforcement sales. More interesting are the AR and ARM models in semi-automatic only, marketed by Magnum Research. Whether your choice is .223 or .308, Magnum Research Inc. has both caliber models of the Galil for sale.

Every feature of the Galil rifle is engineered for dependability. My test Galil ARM in 5.56 NATO has proven to be the best 5.56mm rifle I have ever used. The fact that it works and shoots so well should come as no surprise. Battlefield-tested and refined in the Middle East desert, South African bush and Central American jungles, the Galil is first choice of all who use it.

The Galil AR, ARM and SAR represent the results of adapting the good points of the Kalashnikov rifle and improving on the bad points. While the current-issue ARM and SAR are favorites, the last year has seen some improvements upon the original Galil.

Galil ARM: A refined Kalashnikov made in Israel chambers the more powerful 7.62 NATO cartridge. Photo: Magnum Research, Inc.

The Galil is made under license by not only the South Africans, but also by the German firm of Rheinmetall. Called the "Dutch" model Galil, the Rheinmetall-manufactured weapon has been submitted to the European NATO trials.

The latest version of the Galil to get my interest is the one made under license by the Swedish firm of FFV. This FFV 890C rifle is very closely related to the Israeli-produced Galil SAR. The Swedes have used the shortened gas system of the SAR, but retained a longer barrel to utilize both bayonet and rifle grenades. A modified front handguard is used to provide a secure gripping surface for use with gloves or mittens. An enlarged trigger guard is also standard for the same reason. The FFV 890C is finished with a gray-green epoxy finish to blend in better with most battlefield environments.

Most critical is the fact that the ordnance experts at FFV decided to use a 1-in-9-inch twist barrel for the FFV 890C. This allows the use of either M-193 ball ammo or the newer SS-109 ammunition.

FFV 890C — made under license in Sweden — copies Galil in 5.56 NATO. Photo: FFV Ordnance

Regardless of which ammo is used, the FFV 890C with 1-in-9-inch twist barrel performs well. FNC and M16A2 rifles with 1-in-7-inch barrels will shoot the SS-109 round, but give poor accuracy with M-193 ball ammo.

This compact, rugged and most reliable Galil in FFV 890C dress constitutes nearly the ideal example of .223 *Sturmgewehr*. The Galil may not be cheap, but it is certainly the best.

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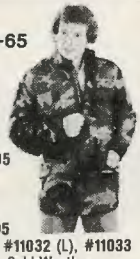

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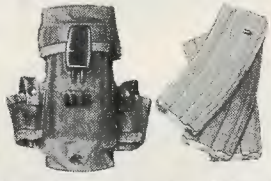

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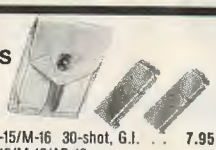

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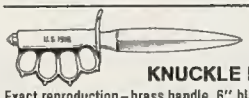

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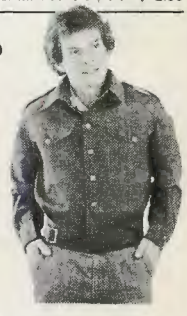

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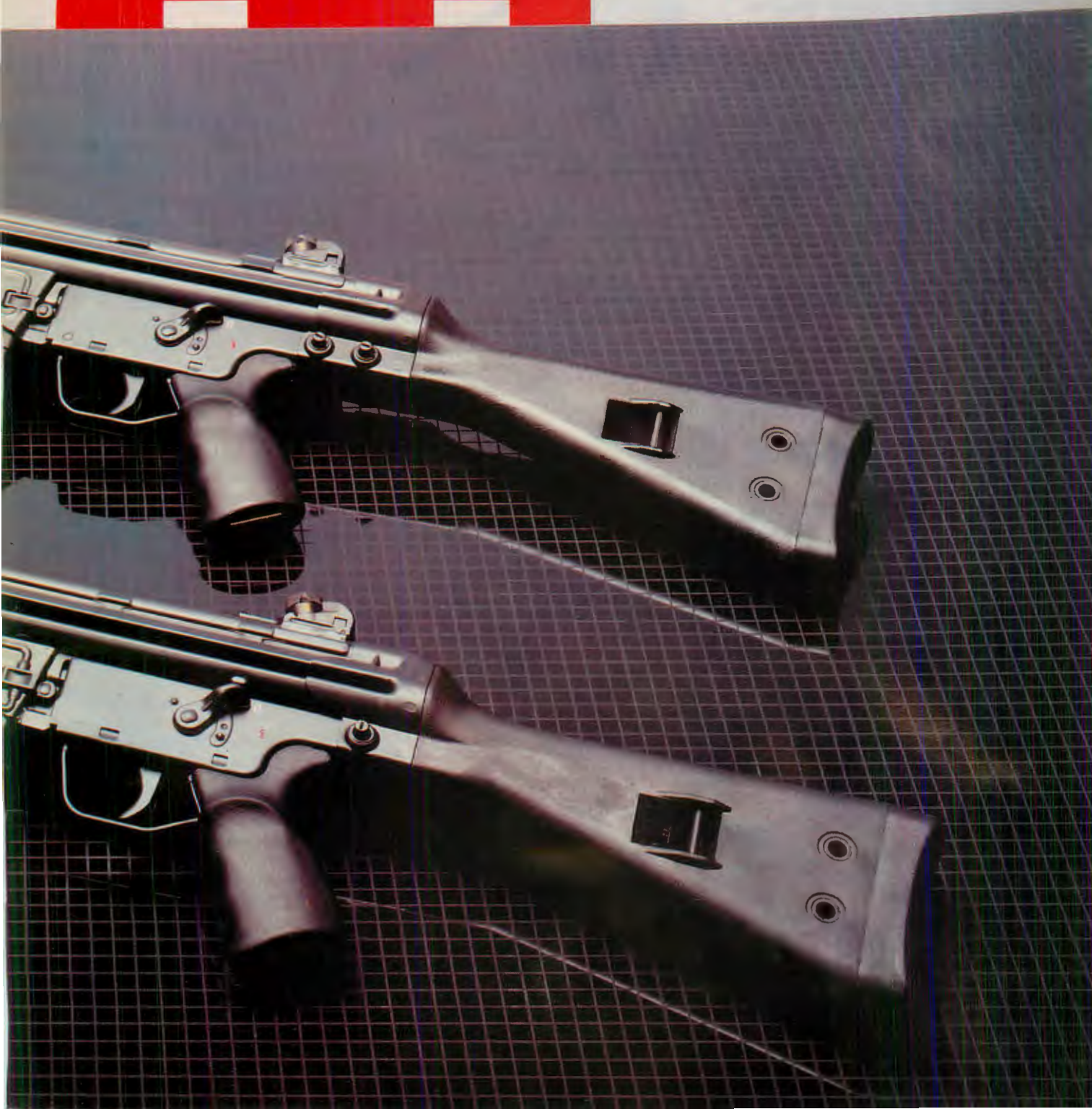


It Happened To Me:

Tale Of A Lost Tail

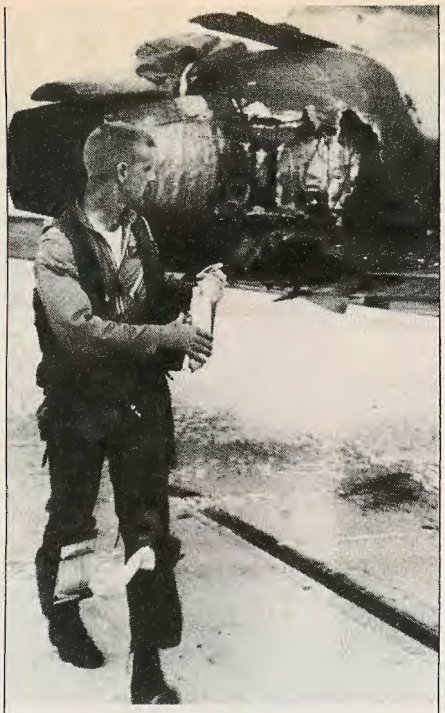
by Lt. Col. John F. Piowaty
as told to M.L. Jones

In 1967, Lt. Col. John F. Piowaty was a pilot with the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing, stationed at Takhli, Thailand. As he tells it:

ON 11 August, we were in the planning room preparing for our afternoon strike against North Vietnam, when an intel guy crossed out the targets on the big planning board and wrote in: PAUL DOUMER RR/HWY BRIDGE.

The tension was electric. The mile-long bridge would be the best target we'd been allowed to hit since the Hanoi refinery raid a year before. And our planned pull-off would take us "downtown," right over Hanoi!

While we flight-planned, our ground crews were given only an hour to change the loads: drop six 750-pound bombs from the belly, download racks, upload belly tanks, swap wing pylons and upload two bridge-busting 3,000 pounders. They did it — we all made our takeoff times.



Ain't I the picture of cool, surveying the damage to my F-105. Note clipboard banging ankle. Photo: USAF

Takeoff was at 1418, with a time-on-target (TOT) of 1600. (We always bombed on the even hour and half-hour. It was simpler for the planners at 7th Air Force and the NVA gunners.) And guns were up that day; the skies were filled with flak, SAMs — and MiGs too. We watched a flight take off from North Vietnam's untouchable Phuc Yen field to hassle our leader, Col. Bob White. White buttonhooked in to lay cluster bombs on the enemy guns.

I rolled in through a gaggle of SAMs and an angry storm of 37, 57, 85 and 100mm. I put the pipper dot of my bombsight on an imaginary spot in the river 60 feet north of the bridge — the offset I had figured from the forecast wind. It was best-guess — North Hanoi Weather Central wouldn't give us their prognostications. I dropped the three-granders and pulled off over the city. I didn't look back for bomb damage assessment. I figured to stay low and give the gunners less of a view of my Mach 1 office.

I headed out, 165 degrees, downstream on the Red River for joinup. I was doing 650, closing on lead, when I noticed things the size of wine bottles lazily passing my canopy — 85mm!

"You can't hit me. I'm too fast and far away. I'm invincible." And then I was hit. My F-105 Thunderchief lit up inside and out. One of those iron wine bottles had about blown my tail off.

The citation given to my flight leader, Lt. Col. MacDonald, after the action, contains this line: "... he slowed to a suicidal speed to give aid to his injured wingman." Actually, what Mac said was, "Damn it all, Bear 4, if you'd slow down maybe we could catch up and give you some help!"

The fire eventually went out. I brought the crippled bird back to Udorn, Thailand, on standby instruments with no stability augmenter. Using emergency air brakes, I proceeded to blow a tire on landing.

But most important, Mo Baker, in Kingfish flight behind me, said I put down the bridge span I was targeted to hit. Mission accomplished.

IF you have a personal adventure for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed.

Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph.

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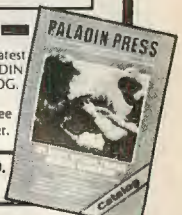

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IN REVIEW

A FACE OF WAR. An Eugene S. Jones Production. *Photography* by J. Baxter Peters, Christopher Sargent and Eugene S. Jones. Sound by Robert Peck. Produced and directed by Eugene S. Jones. International Historic Films, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 29035, Chicago, IL 60629. VHS & Betamax formats, $59.00. Running Time: 77 minutes. Review by Bill Brooks.

CREATED from sights and sounds filmed and recorded in Vietnam, the events and circumstances of **A Face of War** were experienced by Mike Company, 3rd Battalion of the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and are representative of the day-to-day encounters of American troops in the heartland of Vietnam in 1966.

Producer-Director Eugene S. Jones and a crew of three men spent 97 days and nights with a platoon of Mike Company in making this film. This is believed to be the longest period any motion picture team has been with an infantry spearhead in any war.

Jones is no newcomer to war; he has covered infantry action in five conflicts. As a Marine in WWII, he was cited for service with an assault flamethrower squad on Iwo-Jima. As an NBC correspondent rushed to Korea within days of the outbreak of that war, he was the first to film combat from a jet fighter, participated in a bayonet charge on the enemy capital of Pyongyang, parachuted 38 miles behind enemy lines in North Korea on a special UN rescue mission and climbed over the seawall of Inchon's "Blue Beach One" with the first attack wave of Marines. The severe wound he received there made him the only civilian ever decorated with the Purple Heart by the U.S. Marine Corps.

After Korea, Jones distinguished himself for NBC in other battle areas: He served three months in the field with a Free China guerrilla unit when reporting the Chinese Nationalist-Communist struggle; went to the interior of Northern Luzon to cover raids against the Philippine Huks; lowered himself from a hovering helicopter to spend weeks in the jungle with 22nd SAS Regiment troopers in their fight against Malaya's communists; and saw fighting in the desert and at the Suez Canal during the Anglo-Egyptian conflict of 1956-7.

Jones accompanied infantry of the French Foreign Legion during the bitter battles in the Tonkin Delta of Indochina and witnessed the close of that war in 1954, one of the few correspondents remaining in Hanoi to the end. He has now made a total of five trips to Vietnam.

More than half of Mike Company were killed and wounded during Jones' 97-day sojourn. Jones was wounded twice, his first cameraman once.

Photo: Bob Poos

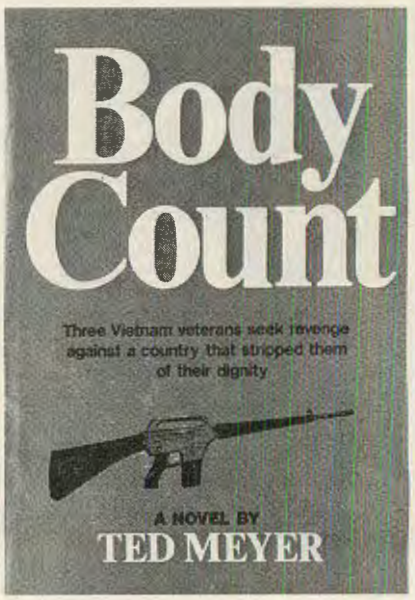
The crew used radio microphones, and as many as three portable sound cameras simultaneously, plus a new high-speed British film stock to capture the reality of combat, not only during the day, but at night. The film is narrated exclusively by natural on-location sounds, its story line growing from events as they occur. The theme is simple: to show the truths of war as experienced by its lowest common denominator — foot soldiers.

The story embraces a twilight ambush by the Viet Cong and a dawn raid by Marines; the death of a village child, and the birth of another; helicopter assaults and lonely patrols; the routine of life on a beleaguered hilltop outpost and the sudden silence of death from mines, booby traps and enemy gunfire through dry seasons and monsoon rains, combat and pacification, success and failure — all of it part of **A Face of War.**

I cannot recommend this video cassette too highly.

BODY COUNT. By Ted Meyer. Exposition Press, Inc., 325 Rabro Dr., Smithtown, NY 11787-0817. 1982. 166 pp. $8.50. Review by John Metzger.

THIS novel by Ted Meyer is the story of three Americans — one hardcore NCO and two conscripted civilians — who wanted to do right by their country when Uncle Sam sent them to 'Nam. They return a scarred and confused trio that become obsessed with the bureaucratic bungling that ruined their lives. The anger builds. So what do our heroes do? Poison to death about 500 hospitalized vets, of course, to prove their point.


Body Count
Three Vietnam veterans seek revenge against a country that stripped them of their dignity
A NOVEL BY
TED MEYER

"Getting that body count, man...."

It goes on, and gets worse. If it's the thought that counts, Meyer's work may be a sympathetic attempt to show America what Vietnam did to the brave men who served there. But as a literary vehicle for this purpose, the book is unbelievable, poorly written and totally absurd.

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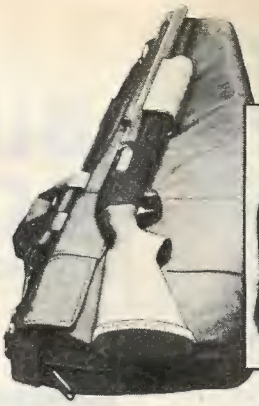

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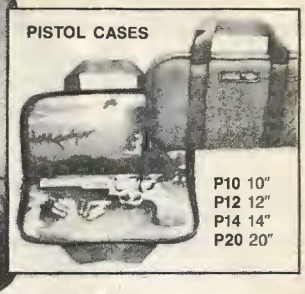

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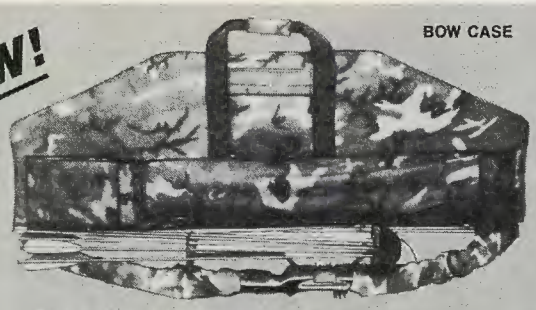

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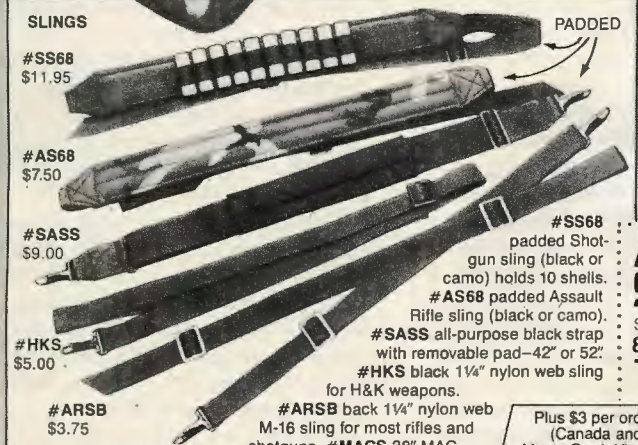

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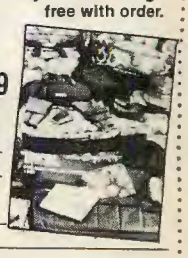

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BULLETIN BOARD

by Donna DuVall

SOF IN SOVIET PRESS...

A reader sent us the following article from *Moscow News Information,* a semi-weekly Moscow newspaper. *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* mentioned in the article, is a weekly Moscow newspaper published by the Soviet Writer's Union. The following excerpt appeared in late December '82:

LIEUT.-COL. BROWN SHOWS UP THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Is the United States engaged in an undeclared war against Afghanistan? Certainly not, is the State Department's stock answer. Literaturnaya Gazeta *has given the lie to this contention by publishing an incriminatory photo which first appeared in the* Soldier of Fortune *magazine, depicting American Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Brown, flanked by Afghan counter-revolutionaries, firing a machine-gun on the Afghan Kopkia border outpost.*

Brown is by no means a petty adventurist. He publishes the mercenaries' mouthpiece, Soldier of Fortune, *and is also closely linked with the CIA and Pentagon intelligence. At their bidding, Brown is smuggling American spies into Afghanistan and has even set up a dollar fund for arms and purchases for Afghan counter-revolutionaries.*

In addition he is now soliciting for the latest weapons of terror and sabotage — such as poison gas pistols, pistols with silencers and special needles carrying poison — in concentrated quantities for particularly important assassinations to be made available to counterrevolutionaries. This, in fact, adds up to the use of American chemical and bacteriological weapons against the Afghans.

The State Department, however, continues to deny the hard facts.

Meanwhile, SOF is still collecting money for the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund. (We don't send poison-gas pistols or needles, or weapons of any type, but we do give the money to the mujahideen leaders to purchase weapons with.) Contributions should be sent to: *Soldier of Fortune*, Attn: Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

SOF IN CENTRAL AMERICA...

Seven SOF staff members, including Editor-Publisher Robert K. Brown, Art Director Craig Nunn, Associate Editor John Metzger, Military Affairs Editor Alex McColl, Explosives-Demolitions Editor John Donovan, Ralph Edens and Paramedic Operations Editor Dr. John Peters, recently returned from a two-week tour of Guatemala and El Salvador. They established valuable contacts for SOF in the two war-torn countries and also found the time to jump with their airborne units, receiving both Guatemalan and Salvadoran air wings.

SOFers with MC1-1B parachutes ready for jump in front of El Salvadoran Air Force DC-3 jump plane. From left to right are: Robert K. Brown, Alex McColl, John Donovan, Ralph Edens, John Metzger, Craig Nunn and unidentified American vacationer.

An in-depth report will appear in July's SOF, but to keep readers posted on this critical area of the Americas, Brown and Company provided the following observations of Guatemala and El Salvador.

A short, but thorough tour of Guatemala convinced SOF that President Jose Efrain Rios Montt's civic-action program (see "Bullets and Beans in Guatemala," SOF, March '83, p. 84) is making steady progress. The real struggle is to integrate the Indian population into the political and cultural mainstream of Guatemalan life, and from what SOF saw, the government program is successful. Thousands of Guatemalan Indians have returned to their villages in Guatemala from so-called refugee camps in Mexico run by communist guerrillas.

SOF was fortunate to be able to interview some of the returning Indians, and their story sharply contradicts charges that the Guatemalan government is oppressing the Indians. No one in the SOF entourage is fluent in Guatemalan Indian dialects, but that didn't prevent them from observing that — in a country where most left-wing sources claim that the people are openly hostile to the government and army — the Indians genuinely liked the government troops and appreciated the protection they provided *from the guerrillas.* Besides, if the government didn't feel that the Indians were on their side, they wouldn't be arming them, which is an important part of the counterinsurgency program of Rios Montt.

One curious note is why a number of U.S. Congressmen and Senators saw fit to condemn the Guatemalan government in letters to the State Department just before the meeting of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, charging that the Rios Montt government "had not moved decisively to restore respect for human rights and democracy ... and that thousands of Guatemalan farmers were under protracted siege by the army in the town of San Martin,

Jinotepeque in Chimaltenango Department."

A reporter for Jack Anderson who was in the area at the time of the alleged siege says that these allegations are false and that the siege did not in fact occur.

The Guatemalan government can defeat the leftist guerrillas and restore order and stability to the country, but it shouldn't have to battle blatant lies intended to turn the American public against the current government — especially when it is clear that Rios Montt's government is making great headway toward eliminating human-rights violations.

The SOF staffers then flew to El Salvador, where they found a similar, but much more critical situation. Before heading out into the country to investigate, however, the staffers (except for Doc Peters who returned to the States early because of an injury sustained in the Guat jump) jumped with the newly organized Salvadoran Airborne Battalion, which is under the command and control of the Air Force, and earned their wings.

Based on discussions with Salvadoran officials about how SOF could contribute to their efforts to defeat the leftist guerrillas and stabilize El Salvador, SOF is embarking on our own aid program to El Salvador. SOF has agreed to: 1) help sponsor an orphanage operated by the Salvadoran Air Force; 2) research the possibility of getting various veterans' organizations to sponsor specific airborne units and 3) put together a medical maintenance team to instruct the Salvadoran Army in the care and maintenance of medical equipment. Right now, SOF is anticipating a seven-to-10 day tour of El Salvador by qualified personnel (former U.S. Army personnel with MOS 35G, 35S and 35T). SOF will pay expenses but no salaries. (Individuals interested in any of the above should contact Alex McColl or Tom Reisinger at SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, or (303) 449-3750.)

"It is imperative that SOF readers and the American public become aware that a war for control of all of Central America is being fought. It is not just a case of isolated guerrilla wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua," Brown warns.

"El Salvador is to Guatemala and Honduras what Nicaragua has been to El Salvador. If El Salvador falls, Sandinista- and Cuban-supplied guerrilla activity will increase in Guatemala until it falls, and Mexico won't be far behind.. If Americans think the problem of illegal aliens from Mexico is bad now, just wait until hundreds of thousands more attempt to flee northward from a leftist regime. It takes no great imagination to see the serious ramifications for America."

The war for Central America will be won or lost as much in Washington as on the ground. The left-wing guerrilla supporters and press have orchestrated a sophisticated and effective propaganda and disinformation campaign to isolate the anti-communists in Central America from U.S. support by manipulating public opinion through the media and by lobbying on Capitol Hill.

It is imperative that SOF readers write, in their own words, letters of support for U.S. aid to El Salvador and send them to the House Foreign Affairs Committee (2170 Rayburn Bldg., Washington DC 20515) and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (42299 Dirksen Bldg., Washington, DC 20510). SOF also encourages readers to send a copy of their letters to the president, and their congressmen and senators. To find out the Washington addresses of the congressmen or senators, contact your local newspaper. Letters supporting increased aid to El Salvador should also be sent to local newspapers, radio and TV editors.

"Such efforts do not go unnoticed," Brown promises. "Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), who opposes aid to El Salvador, says that he has received thousands of letters opposing U.S. aid to El Salvador, and only four or five supporting it. Balance out this inequity. Let our leaders know how Americans really feel about the critical situation in Central America. Individual letters to lawmakers and the media are important — they are read and do influence decisions."

SOF is considering organizing a tour of El Salvador and Guatemala for a serious look at the military-social-economic-political problems of the two Central American countries. Anyone interested in more information on this should contact SOF, Attn: Central American Tour, at the address listed above.

SAM-3s IN CUBA . . .

About 140 SAM-3 missiles were recently delivered to Cuba from the Soviet Union, ending the second straight year of massive infusions of Soviet arms into the Caribbean island. The SAMs will strengthen Havana's air defenses.

Additional military shipments last year included a couple of MiG-21 jets. Cuba already has over 200 MiGs in its air force.

The Soviets delivered over 66,000 tons of weapons to Cuba in 1981, and Pentagon sources estimate that the 1982 deliveries, which may total more than $1 billion, exceeded that.

The SAM-3 missiles are armed with high-explosive warheads, and have an effective range of 25 miles against fighter planes flying at an altitude less than 49,000 feet.

The SAM-3s and MiGs are additions to a Soviet-supplied arsenal that has made Cuba by far the strongest military force in the Caribbean. Other weapons that the Soviets have sent to Cuba include SAM-6 missiles (range: 22 miles) and SAM-2s (range: 25 miles). Both the Soviet Union and Cuba maintain that the arsenal is necessary to protect Cuba from a U.S. invasion.

MEN FOR ALL SEASONS. . .

Soldier of Fortune received Christmas greetings from the Marines of 2nd Platoon, K Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, stationed in Beirut, Lebanon. The card, which depicts Marines raising a Christmas tree a la Iwo Jima, came in acknowledgment of the 200 complimentary copies of SOF which we send each month to the Marines in Lebanon. The Marines in Lebanon are, as the card states, "helping make it right"; and that's no easy task in Lebanon.

BIANCHI $40,000 GIVEAWAY. . .

Pistoleros competing in major practical events in 1983 may be eligible to compete for the $40,000 in cash that Bianchi Gunleather will be giving away to lucky winners.

Each of the top 200 competitors who use their Bianchi gunleather during all events in the top six practical pistol matches in 1983 (including the SOF match 5-7 October in Las Vegas) will earn $120 in cash, paid $20 per event. Competitors finishing in the upper 20 places will earn an additional $100; third-, second- and first-place finishers will earn an additional $500, $750 and $1,000 respectively. A consistent Bianchi champion could eam as much as $7,000.

The six matches that comprise the Bianchi "$40,000 Proposition" are: the Bianchi Cup International Pistol Tournament; the Second Chance Police Combat Shoot; The Steel Challenge Pistol Tournament; the IPSC

Continued on page 85

FULL AUTO

MG 08-15: One Heavy Muther

by Peter G. Kokalis

WHETHER it be cutting the handle off toothbrushes, ditching equipment thought to be nonessential or shorting himself on field rations, weight considerations are the ground-pounder's greatest concern and complaint. Weight parameters are an important element in all modern military small-arms design programs. We need examine only one example from the past to see how far we have come in this area.

The First World War saw the machine gun rise to devastating prominence. Automatic weapons using the cartridge's counter-recoiling forces to operate the mechanism had already been on the scene for some time. Inventions by Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim, John Browning, Laurence V. Benet, Henri A. Mercie, Andreas Schwarzlose and others had given most of the armies of Europe an array of firepower whose proper use was still an enigma to the tradition-bound officer classes of the 20th century's first decades. They were still debating the merits of the lance versus the saber in a cavalry charge, while consigning the machine-gun batteries to the regions outside the old boys' club.

The German army entered the war in 1914 with not more than 2,000 Maxim MG 08 machine guns. Although a medium machine gun in today's parlance, by virtue of its 7.92mm rifle caliber cartridge, the MG 08 was a brute in size and weight. Complete with its clumsy sled mount and water in the jacket, the MG 08 weighs in at over 90 pounds, empty. Not exactly ideal for tripping through the tulips of no-man's land out in front of the trenches.

However, the Maxim machine gun was inspired. Recoil-operated and gas-assisted, it was strong and dependable. During Austrian trials of the Maxim in the 1890s, 200,000 rounds were fired with practically no stoppages, with the greatest number fired at one time through a single gun being 35,000.

The *Maxim was first* used by the British in the Rhodesian Matabele war of 1893. A detachment of 50 men with four Maxims defended themselves against 5,000 warriors who charged them five times in 90 minutes. The Matabele were stopped each time less than 100 yards in front of the British lines. They left over 3,000 dead.

Soon after WWI commenced, the Germans realized that tactical conditions required a more portable machine gun. The British had the Lewis LMG (28 pounds with bipod), and the Americans and French had the failure-prone, but light (18 pounds), Chauchat. In haste, the Germans chose to modify the Maxim 08. Developed by Col. von Merkatz, the MG 08/15, as it was called, was standardized in 1915 and by 1916 began to appear in some numbers on the battlefield.

The MG 08/15 differs from the MG 08 in the following ways. A non-adjustable, but detachable, bipod replaced the cumbersome sled mount. The bipod was mounted just forward of the receiver, where it afforded maximum lateral maneuverability, but minimum fire control. A shoulder stock was fitted to the rear of the receiver, replacing the spade grips.

A pistol grip and trigger were placed under the receiver. The thickness of the receiver's side plates was reduced to further lighten the weapon. The diameter of the water jacket was reduced and the capacity diminished from eight to six pints. The rear sight was changed and a heavy leather assault sling was provided. A drum-type belt carrier, which contained a 100-round cloth belt, was attached to the right side of the receiver.

The German decision to stay with the Maxim design simplified production of the new LMG and reduced the training period for troops in the field. Both factors were important considerations, as the Maxim machine gun's design was complex.

With a cyclic rate of 500 rpm, the 08/15 was an effective weapon, inflicting great casualties on the Allied forces. The German machine-gunners were outstanding, brave men and the pick of the German Army. But man himself was no longer lord and master of the battlefield.

With the ascent of the machine gun in WWI, the individual no longer counted for much. If a machine gun could impersonally wipe out a whole battalion of men in a few minutes, of what meaning were the old concepts of glory, heroism and chivalry? It has been estimated that 30 percent of WWI's casualties were caused by machine guns.

While used with horrific effect against Allied advances, the 08/15 was less than ideal as an assault machine gun. With water in its jacket and a full load of ammo in its belt carrier, the 08/15 weighed close to 58 pounds! Now, that's something to groan about. The M60 GPMG weighs 23 pounds (empty) and the new M249 SAW only 15.5 pounds (empty). We've done much to ease the load for troops humping through the bush.

The Germans continued after WWI to regard the 08/15 highly. In the 1930s the MG 08/15's feed block was altered so that it could accept either the original Maxim cloth belt or the new *Gurt* 33, a non-disintegrating metallic link belt developed for the MG 34. The MG 08/15 was even used to a considerable extent as a substitute standard during WWII. It is gone now, yet was an important chapter in the history of military small arms — just be grateful you didn't have to hump this heavy muther.

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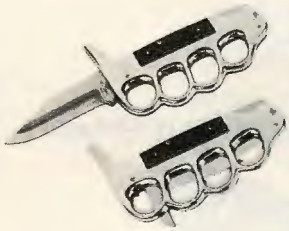

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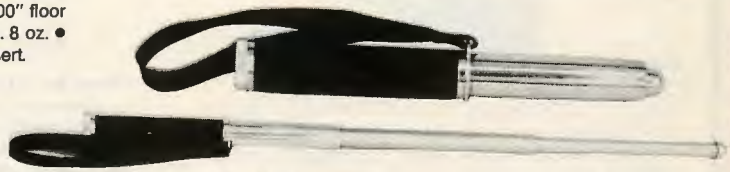

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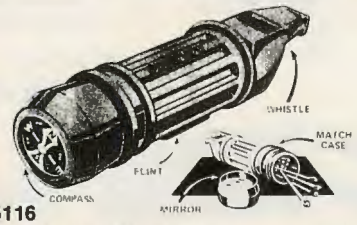

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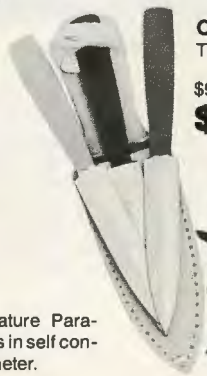

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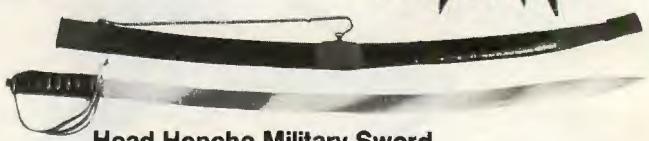

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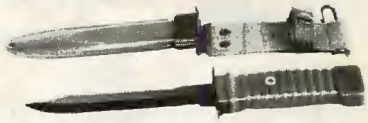

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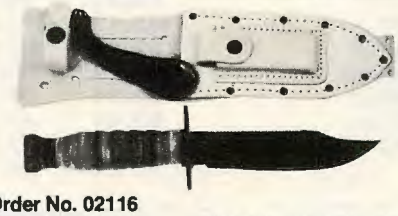

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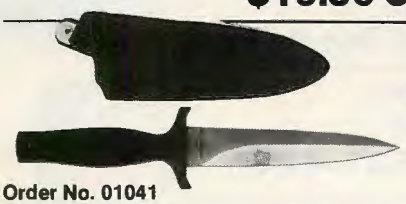

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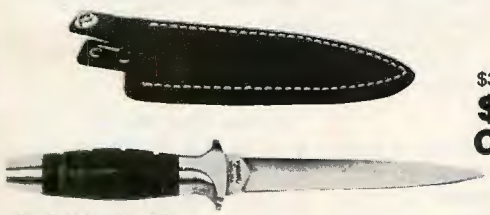

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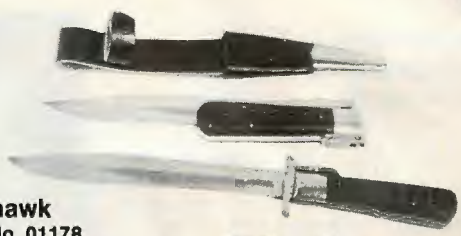

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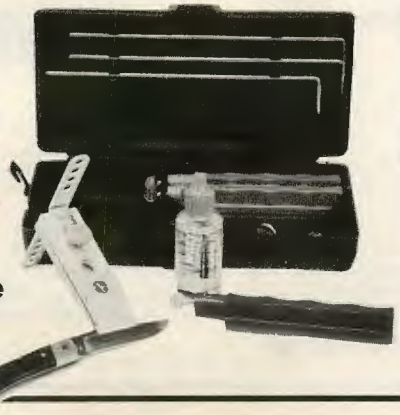

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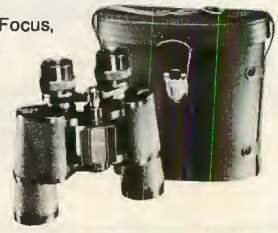

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31 33	29 30 31 32 33 34
32 34 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 36
40 42	30 32 34

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29 30 31 33 38	30 31 32 33 34 36
32 34 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 36

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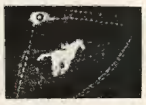

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20903	9
20904	11
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20906	15

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20909	10
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CHARLIE'S LUCK AT DAK TO

Text & Photos by Kenneth Rose

C-130 burns on runway after mortar attack.

THE Dak Poko River Valley in the central highlands of Vietnam is one of the most beautiful and mysterious places in the world. The river snakes its way from somewhere in Laos, through the highlands, finally emptying into the Mekong far to the south. Before the fighting grew intense, the Montagnard tribesmen used to carry their hill rice along this river to marketplaces in Kontum and Pleiku, but after American combat troops entered the war, a different kind of traffic frequented the valley.

The 5th Special Forces Group (airborne) built a fortified "A" Camp smack in the middle of the valley, about halfway between the border and Kontum, the province capital. The camp was built in 1965 by U.S. Navy Seabees and, except for the team house and a few supply buildings, was completely underground. The Viet Cong weren't too happy about having their infiltration route disrupted by a bunch of Green Berets and their Montagnard Strikers patrolling the trails, so they assaulted the camp often. Intermittent probes and mortar attacks weren't taken too seriously since they didn't pose any real danger, but in June 1967, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) started to use the route.

A sustained mortar attack on 17 June convinced the brass that the situation was serious, since seven of the 13 Americans in camp were medevacked that day. Help arrived.

This assistance, in the form of American combat troops, was indirectly responsible for a freak accident that destroyed most of the camp. At least, I think it was an accident. Charlie may have been a lot smarter or better informed than I give him credit for.

On the morning of 15 November at 0800 hours, Staff Sgt. Robert Holzer and I were busy copying an erratic CW (continuous wave) radio signal. Dots and dashes screamed out of the headset that Bob hung around his neck. (The signal was too strong for him to put the phones over his ears.) We worked our radio intercept position from a bunker in the Special Forces "A" Camp (A-244) at Dak To. We were here because the patrols from the "A" Team and units of the 4th Division and 173rd Airborne (operating in the area) found mounting evidence of a massing of main-force NVA units, battalion size and larger.

Military Region 5 (MR-5) reportedly had moved into the tri-border area of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, just to the west of Dak To. It was our job to either confirm or deny this build-up, finding out just what kind of offensive the NVA was planning, and if possible, when it was to take place.

Holzer and I were members of the 403rd Radio Research Special Operations Detachment (Airborne), 5th SF, better known as SOD. We were responsible for gathering intel info in areas where conventional intelligence units were unable to operate. Dak To was crucial to our operations in the central highlands since it straddled Highway 19 (QL 19) that ran all the way from Saigon to Vientiane, Laos.

Although the highway was closed, remains of it made an excellent trail since the area was still clear of jungle growth. The Ho Chi Minh Trail from Hanoi intersected QL 19 in the tri-border area. This made old QL 19 one of the NVA's main infiltration routes, right down the Dak Poko Valley, and the camp at Dak To controlled the valley.

Holzer was bent over his mill copying the incoming message when we were interrupted by the familar sound of incoming mortar rounds. We didn't say anything, just looked at each other. He snatched off his headset and we both burst through the door. Holzer bounded up on the roof of the bunker.

"Look at this," he called down to me. "Charlie got himself a C-130."

I scrambled up to join him. Sure enough, one of the giant Hercules that had been unloading munitions into the ammo dump, run by the 5th Log Command to supply the 4th and 173rd, was engulfed in flames. The ammo dump sat about 100 meters east of our outer wire, so Holzer took off running to warn the team leader.

The unlucky bird had taken most of the shrapnel from six or seven mortar rounds and was the one closest to the ammo dump itself.

The second in line had taken some hits also, but not nearly as many as the first. It was bracketed by rounds, on either side, and although the wing tanks sprayed JP-4, the plane wasn't on fire.

The last C-130 on the ground was at the end of the pierced-steel-plate (PSP) apron paralleling the runway. By the time the first began to blaze, that one was already lifting off the tarmac, heading south for Pleiku.

Special Forces' camps in Vietnam had a reputation for good food. Ours was no exception. Co Sau, our Vietnamese

cook, could bake the best hot rolls in the country, and our visitors made it a point to head directly for the team house when meal time neared. That is where the crews from the two C-130s were.

Fascinated, I watched the rivulets of JP-4 stream out of the shrapnel-punctured wing tanks of the surviving Hercules, the tail-gate slowly closing like the mouth of a lazy alligator, the engines whining a banshee scream, as it slowly lumbered toward the runway.

An Air Force crew, wearing gray flight suits, burst out of the team house, sprinted toward the runway and froze, staring at their plane just clearing it. The wounded Herc strained to separate its tires from the tarmac, won its battle, and was airborne.

"Way to fuckin' go, chief," young Maj. Gilbert, the plane commander, shouted. He was joined by a chorus of yells and cheers from the rest of the airplane crew.

We learned later that the C-130 crew chief, Sgt. Joseph F. Mack, was aboard the plane, sitting in the cockpit, waiting for his turn at the unloading dock, when the mortar rounds came in. Without hesitation, he made the right decision.

He not only won himself a Silver Star, but he saved the Air Force a lot of money by safely landing the C-130 at Pleiku Air Force Base.

Fifth Log supply people made a half-hearted attempt to put the fire out but no one wanted to stay too close to a burning plane, loaded with ammo that could explode at any time.

At approximately 1030, just 2½ hours after the first attack, more rounds fell. Charlie found his range this time. Six or eight rounds landed right on target — the ammo dump. All hell broke loose.

Facing northeast out of Dak To. Bamboo-covered bunkers in foreground housed Montagnard strikers. Airfield office in right background.

A chain reaction of secondary explosions began, with burning rounds rocketing high into the air, propelled by others cooking off next to them. Some of these rounds burst high up, while others plummeted back to earth, smashing through roofs and generally wrecking our camp.

Munitions stored in the dump ranged from small arms to 175mm projos, and most everything in between. It was like being under an artillery barrage, since a lot of the heated rounds were detonating on impact.

Our team sergeant and chief radioman had a security patrol out covering the area to the northeast of camp, a flank protection for the conventional units in the AO (area of operations). When the pandemonium started, they requested permission to return to camp, but our young team leader, a 23-year-old captain, wanted to handle the situation himself. As a result, there were only nine Americans left in camp.

The intel sergeant and I began to organize the Montagnards — who were pretty upset by these things they couldn't understand — into some sort of defense posture. We expected a ground attack come nightfall, so everyone was pretty tense.

A grim determination pervaded the camp as the sun fell behind the dark-green mountains to the west.

At 2000, Bob Holzer and I sat in the sandbagged entrance of our bunker, which adjoined the wooden building we slept in. The fire had abated some and the popcorn of small-arms burning was punctuated very infrequently by the roar of large munitions exploding. We began to relax a little.

We'd stopped all intercept activity because the barrage had knocked out all of our antennas and we weren't anxious to try to rebuild them until after things cooled off.

We looked at the refrigerator (stolen from the Air Force at Pleiku) and re-

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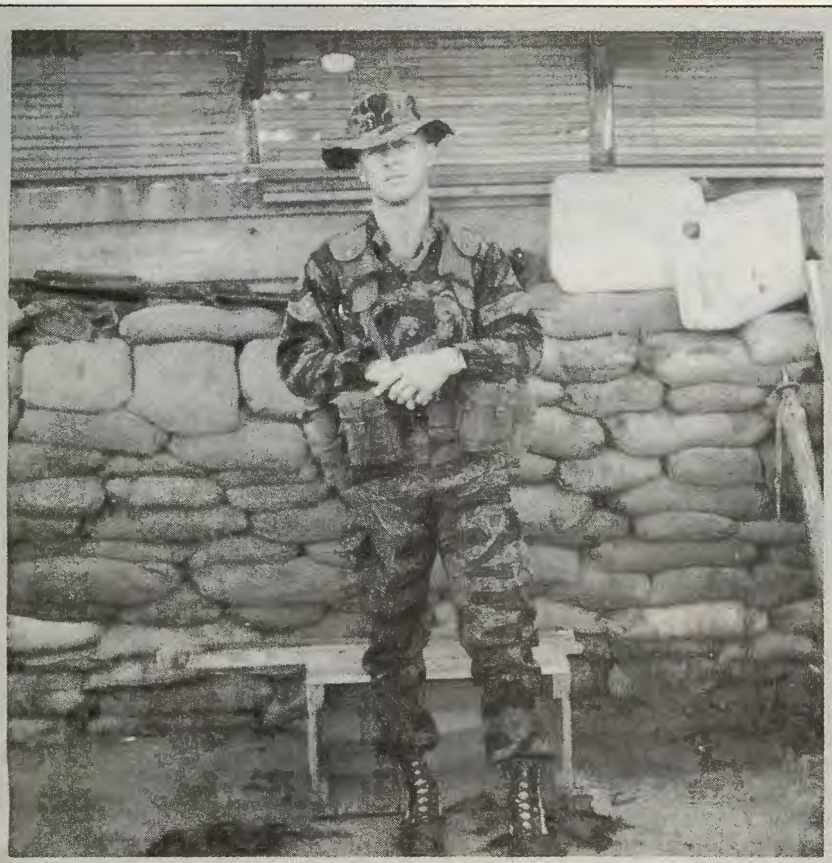


GREEN BERET WRITER

Kenneth Edward Rose has led a life of diversified activities.

From poet to Green Beret, professional rodeo cowboy to musician, he now teaches creative writing at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton and is a captain assigned to the Provost Marshal's office, Oklahoma National Guard.

A native Oklahoman, Rose joined the Army in 1961 after a tour in the Navy. He was in Special Forces until 1970, when he was released from active duty. Serving three years in the Republic of South Vietnam, Rose attained the rank of sergeant first class.

After leaving the Army, Rose returned to college to earn his B.A. in English at Southeastern State College, his M.B.S. at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and to work on his doctorate at East Texas State University.

Rose's long list of military schooling includes Jumpmaster Course, Pathfinder Course, Basic Airborne Course, 82nd Division Raider Committee, Jungle Warfare School and Special Forces Basic Indoctrination.

We are pleased to print this fellow adventurer's first contribution to SOF. —John Metzger

TRIPLE MiG KILL

Pair of Aces Beats Three of a Kind

by Richard Parque

NG 100 on VF-96 flight line at NAS Miramar following combat cruise aboard USS *America* and just before cruise aboard USS *Constellation* in which it became Navy's highest-scoring MiG-killer Phantom. Photo: Duane Kasulka/Tailhook

DAWN color stained the Gulf of Tonkin on 10 May 1972, as the crew of the USS *Constellation* prepared for another day of Operation Rolling Thunder over North Vietnam. None of the pilots realized that today would give America its first pair of Vietnam air aces.

PSHHHHHH — WHAM! The launch catapult slammed home and aircraft number NG 100 thundered down the deck of the USS *Constellation*. The massive prow dipped heavily into the placid South China Sea and the F-4J lifted easily from the attack carrier, splitting the dawn with the fiery roar erupting from its twin J-79 General Electric engines.

Lt. Randy Cunningham, with two MiG kills, was at the throttle of Showtime 100. He gave the heavily armed Phantom right rudder and watched the *Connie* slip underneath him. His wingman, Brian Grant, flying Showtime 110, was already being hammered into the sky and climbing toward his tailpipes.

Lt. (JG) Willie Driscoll, radar intercept officer (RIO) in the backseat, turned on the attack radar display panel, flipped to air-to-air mode and watched the artificial horizon roll through the green grid lines. He adjusted his oxygen mask and started the instruments check, catching a last glimpse of the *Constellation* plying through the dark waters. The bearing indicator swept north.

Jets from Carrier Task Group 77.4 (CTG 77.4) had been relentlessly pounding targets around Hanoi and Hai Phong since January 1972 in support of "Operation Rolling Thunder." With the breakdown of the Paris peace negotiations in late '71, U.S. planners had decided to call Hanoi's bluff by breaking the bombing halt and sending the attack aircraft north again. All our chips on the Paris crap table were betting that the North Vietnamese would be forced into a final peace plea as they watched the incremental waste and ruin of their country by U.S. war planes.

Cunningham knew that just two days before, 8 May 1972, President Nixon had given the order to seed Hai Phong harbor with mines, effectively blockading North Vietnam and portentously raising the ante for the stubborn communists. Today the angry MiGs would be up.

ACE WRITER

Richard Parque is an aerospace consultant and technical writer based in Los Angeles. He has B.A. and M.A. degrees from California State University at Los Angeles and is listed in the 1983-84 version of *Who's Who in California*. He is an authority on Vietnam and has written several books and articles on the war. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps where he received his flight training, and lives in southern California with his Vietnamese wife and three young sons.

The *Connie* and the supporting ships comprising CTG 77.4 had recently joined the *Midway* and *Enterprise* in establishing total target coverage of the Navy's portion of seven "Route Packages" into North Vietnam. With the combined destructive power of Task Force 77 and the U.S. Seventh Air Force, and the United States hoped that Rolling Thunder's bombing plan would bring the communists to their knees.

Shortly after the *Constellation* arrived on station and Operation Rolling Thunder was resumed, Cunningham claimed his first MiG. On 19 January 1972, he was credited with shooting down the first enemy aircraft in nearly two years. Escorting an unarmed reconnaissance mission over Quan Lang airfield, he attacked a MiG-21 low on the deck. The MiG evaded his first Sidewinder, but the second one blew off its tail, and the aircraft violently pitched over and crashed near a village.

On 8 May 1972, Cunningham shot down his second North Vietnamese aircraft, this one a MiG-17. While providing MiG Combat Air Patrol (MIGCAP) for a USS *Constellation* strike group at Son Tay (a MiG-pilot training base), he was attacked by three MiGs firing guns and missiles. Cunningham engaged the MiGs, and pulled in behind one of the 17s that had made a firing pass on his wingman. He fired two Sidewinders; the first missed. But the second burst into the MiG and caused it to crash into Karst Ridge. That was just two days ago. Today three more MiGs would fall before his missiles.

Showtime 100 climbed to altitude and hit the orbiting KA-3B tanker. Cunningham topped off his fuel, dropped off the tanker with a full bag and wheeled northwest. Below and to port and starboard, Showtime strike group began forming for its bomb run on the Hai Duong rail yards. Full racks of ordnance swayed and jiggled underneath the A-6s and the A-7s; Cunningham rechecked the attack profile for his flak-suppression mission.

Within minutes, the verdant coast came into view. The Phantom — loaded with Rockeye bombs, Sparrow missiles in rear fuselage well, Sidewinders on inboard rails and a centerline fuel tank — responded sluggishly to the drag as the 30-year-old Navy lieutenant pushed over for his dash into North Vietnam.

Bombs Away! Showtime Screamed Over Target And Streaked For Home.

The jade-colored sea gave way to jungle canopy and the familiar checkered pattern of rice paddies. Suddenly they were there — over the target — and the A-6s and A-7s were going in.

Cunningham rolled up and swung into orbit, waiting his turn to unload. The air was filling quickly with black and gray smoke. Bombs slid from beneath wings and, in groups of twos and threes, the attack planes rotated and streaked for home. NVA antiaircraft opened up, knocking down one F-4 and crippling another. While Cunningham rolled in on his target, Driscoll anxiously searched the blue for MiGs. Simultaneously, SAMs rose in search of them.

North Vietnam's air defenses consisted of antiaircraft artillery weapons (AAA), surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and fighter-interceptor aircraft — making it the most awesome antiaircraft system ever assembled. U.S. pilots had to fight for their lives from the moment they entered North Vietnam to the time they left.

Triple A, which took the heaviest toll of all American planes, included mostly radar-controlled guns — 85mm and 100mm — as well as smaller caliber 37mm artillery pieces that were optically sighted. During the early part of the war U.S. strike aircraft used high-speed, low-level penetration to the target.

However, as the North Vietnamese became more experienced against this tactic, aircraft losses to ground fire began to mount and air crews assumed safer, higher altitudes.

Then on 24 July 1965, the Russian SS-2 SAM made its appearance, destroying one USAF F-4 striker and damaging three others near Hanoi. U.S. pilots returned to the deck and aircraft losses again rose sharply in the face of withering AAA. SAM rings and triple A rapidly spread across the surface of North Vietnam and strike forces were effectively denied a safe altitude.

Meanwhile, increased numbers of advanced Atoll-firing MiG-21s appeared in the northern skies. Masked from U.S. radar by flying on the deck, MiGs were directed by their ground controllers to the strike force's six o'clock position. Lighting their afterburners, the MiGs

MiG-21PF (left) and MiG-17 fighters, reported flown by North Vietnam's Col. Tomb, sit at an airfield near Hanoi. Both aircraft carry 13 kill markings. Photo: Tailhook

Test flight gives change of pace after dogfights over North Vietnam. Air ace Cunningham boards F-14A Tomcat. Photo: U.S. Navy

gained a lot of speed and energy. Zoom climbing, they smashed through the strikers at Mach 1 or better, launched their missiles in salvos and streaked across the sky for home.

U.S. pilots met these threats by using new, sophisticated electronic countermeasure (ECM) equipment; flying appropriate evasive manuevers; using Wild Weasels (attack aircraft equipped with radar homing missiles); making fire-suppression runs on SAM and AAA sites; carrying more advanced and agile air-to-air missiles; and mounting guns on their planes.

Rolling off the target, Showtime 110 called the MiGs pulling into Cunningham's seven o'clock position. He looked out the F-4's canopy and watched one of the 17s rolling around to his six, firing his cannons. Instinctively, Cunningham broke into the communist MiG, knowing that at its speed the pilot would have little chance of muscling the stick over to stay with his Phantom. Predictably, the MiG pilot overshot and Cunningham smoothly reversed to the inside of the 17.

Cunningham selected HEAT on the weapon-mode switch. The armament-control system instantly programmed a launch sequence for the AIR-9 Sidewinders and displayed a STBY (Standby) light on the missile-status indicator for missile station three, which was first in the launch sequence. Pulses surged as adrenalin flowed freely.

Final attack set-up: Cunningham set the MASTER switch on the armament control panel to ARM. RDY (Ready) replaced STBY on the missile-status indicator for station three. While the missiles were being sequenced for firing, the Phantom's central computer was processing radar-supplied tracking data on the MiG.

The radar angle-tracked the target as Cunningham turned with the enemy, and it continually updated the computer data on the MiG's position. The system computed "AIM-9 pursuit steering solution" and positioned a steering dot on the radar display. The computer also displayed a fixed-diameter-reference circle representing the missile seeker field-of-view on the radar scope. Cunningham positioned the F-4 so the steering dot was within the circle, while Driscoll continually updated the MiG's position on the radar.

As Cunningham gunned the ship into range and got the reticle centered, the Sidewinder's seeker head sensed the MiG's infrared radiation, and produced a tone heard in his headset. As the parameters edged toward maximum and the F-4 pushed through 12,000 feet, the tone intensified until Cunningham had a strong, steady amplification. The range-to-target indicator slipped through the Rmin into the Rmax launch limits and an IN RNG (In Range) cue lit up on the panel. Simultaneously a shoot cue appeared; Driscoll signaled Cunningham through the intercom that he had full system lock-on to the MiG. The Sidewinder was slaved to the radar line of sight and Randy pulled the trigger, launching the AIM-9 at station three.

The launch signal applied voltage to the forward striker point, arming the missile and activating the guidance mechanism. The aft striker point ignited the rocket motor and the Sidewinder blasted toward the doomed gooner. The heat seeker smoked after the Soviet interceptor, made a corrective wiggle, then plowed into the hapless MiG, ripping it apart in a violent explosion.

Cunningham and his wingman rolled off the kill and looked aft, eyes following the long trailing flames. The North Vietnamese crashed and burned. No chute was observed. MiG number one.

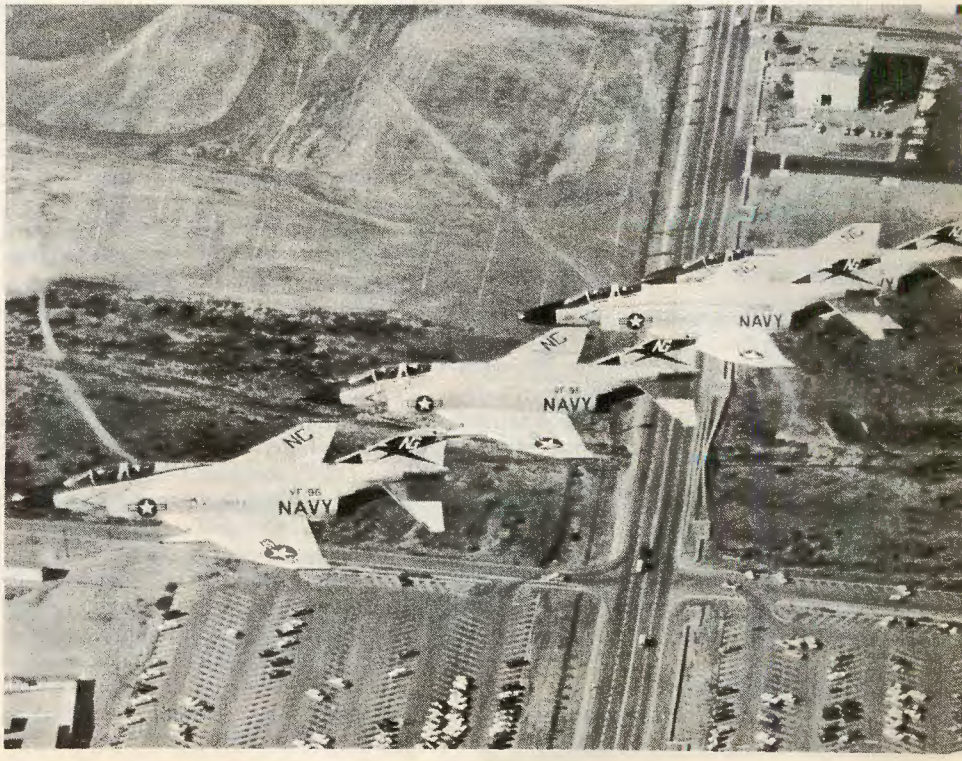
The fight had lasted one-and-a-half minutes (about average for jets over Vietnam) and had carried Showtime section (100 and 110) two to four miles south of the Hai Duong target area. They were down to an altitude of 10,000 feet and the action was just beginning. The hungry hunters, still with plenty of gas, pulled their ships' noses high and put the Phantoms into a vertical climb in search of more prey. Pitching over the top in a 180-degree-change-of-direction roll, afterburners cooking, Cunningham and Grant headed back to the target area, spoiling for another fight.

Cunningham had a healthy respect for the MiGs and their pilots. The Soviet-built interceptors were well-armed and much more maneuverable than his F-4. For the most part, the MiGs were flown by skilled pilots, particularly later in the war. Navy and Air Force Intelligence claimed that pilot training was carried out at various bases around Hanoi by experienced Russian and North Korean MiG drivers. Some pilots and ground crews received instruction in Russia.

The MiG-17 Fresco was a nimble fighter. Dwarfed by the larger U.S. F-4, it was the Russian follow-up to the historic MiG-15 flown against American F-86 Sabres in Korea. The MiG-17 was a single-place, single-engine fighter with afterburner, armed with one 37mm and two 23mm cannon in the nose. It could be fitted with four Alkali radar-guided missiles or four pods of 55mm unguided air-to-air missiles.

The MiG-19 Farmer was not used against U.S. planes as extensively as the MiG-17 and MiG-21. It had two axial-flow jet engines and a flat, short fuselage. It was a one-seater and was armed with a 37mm cannon in the nose and a 23mm and 30mm cannon in each wing root. It could also carry 55mm unguided rockets and guided missiles mounted on wing rails. The Farmer had a range of 750 miles and reached speeds of Mach 1.3.

VF-96 Fighting Falcons F-4J NG 100, flown by Lt. Randy Cunningham and LtJG Willie Driscoll during triple MiG shootdown spree of 10 May 1972, leads flight of four aircraft over NAS Miramar prior to VF-96's deployment. Photo: Tailhook



MiG-17 — photographed from U.S. cockpit — attempts to shake off U.S. pursuer. Staying behind MiG forces NV pilot to concentrate on evasive actions. Photo: U.S. Navy

The MiG-21s flying in Vietnam were Fishbed models. The delta-wing, high-performance fighter had "dash" speeds of Mach 2.3 and could fly 1,000 miles without refueling. It was equipped with sophisticated avionics and was heavily armed with Atoll air-to-air missiles, copies of the U.S. Sidewinder. It was also configured to carry 37mm, 30mm and 23mm cannon, as well as 50mm and 55mm rockets. The Fishbed was an advanced weapon system. In the hands of an experienced pilot, it presented a difficult test for the best American aircraft.

Now at 15,000 feet, Cunningham dipped his starboard wing and spotted eight MiG 17s in a counter-clockwise defensive orbit at about 10,000 feet over Hai Duong. Several F-4s were in the wheel with them, and to the northeast four MiG-17s were diving in a column.

Showtime 112 Turned Into Deep Trouble As Three MiGs Closed In.

One of the F-4s broke out and was immediately bounced by three MiGs — two 17s and a 21. The Navy jet, Showtime 112, also from the *Connie*, was in a slow turn east and in deep trouble. Cunningham rolled in and called the MiGs to Showtime 112. One 17 had closed to within a half-mile and the 21 was hard behind the 17. Amazingly, Showtime 112 hadn't yet seen the third MiG 17 pulling into him for a firing pass.

Cunningham had a good tone signal on his Sidewinder but was afraid the missile would home to the U.S. aircraft, which was in afterburner, instead of to the MiG. Cunningham shouted over the radio for Showtime 112 to break right, setting the MiG up for a clear shot. But 112 continued his turn in front of the 17.

Communications during combat over the North were extremely difficult. Often 25 to 30 planes would be using the same frequency. In addition, the pilot and RIO constantly talked in the cockpit. To add further confusion, the ECM equipment also gave audible warnings of enemy SAM, AAA and air-to-air missile activity.

Still screaming at the other American jet, Cunningham looked up in time to see two MiG-19s beginning to roll and fire on him. Then two MiG-21s appeared overhead, carefully watching the fight. Now in desperate trouble himself, Cunningham skillfully manuevered his Phantom as Driscoll in the backseat called off the MiG positions.

In modern aerial combat, a fight is so fast and furious that the action can easily get away from a pilot before he knows what has happened. The speeds are so great, the maneuvers so violent and the surprise so quick that the jet driver must react automatically to simultaneous threats often originating from different sources. If his reactions are not immediate and correct, he's usually dead. There are few second chances.

This was Showtime 100's situation as he continued to out-maneuver the 19s on his tail, keep the 17 attacking Showtime 112 in range, outfly the 21s above (waiting for him to make a mistake) and watch for SAMs and AAA below.

Cunningham was flying the F-4J, one of the most sophisticated models of the McDonnell-designed and -built Phantom II series. The first Phantom models were designed originally in the early '50s as all-weather interceptors to protect the U.S. fleet, their mission restricted to shooting down bombers. Weapons systems were engineered accordingly.

However, after being rushed into service during the early days of the Vietnam War, it became apparent that more flexible weaponry was required. Models began to come on line fitted with guns and more maneuverable missiles. Improvements were made to the airframe and integrated systems so the F-4 could compete with the quicker- and sharper-turning MiGs, and counter North Vietnam's devastating array of surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft guns. As a result, the F-4 Phantom emerged as America's premier air fighter, compiling a kill ratio of 2:1 over the MiG.

The F-4, in addition to flying cover for attack aircraft — primarily the F-105, A-6, A-7 and the long-range strategic B-52 bomber — also evolved into a formidable bomber of unique capability. When in the attack role, the F-4 carried a hefty payload of conventional bombs: 14,000 pounds, twice the payload of the B-17 in WWII. Additionally, carrying the Navy-developed Shrike missile, Phantoms would often precede attack planes to the target and launch their air-to-ground missiles against SAM sites. The Shrike would home in on the SAM's radar beam, follow it in and detonate.

"Dash" speed of the F-4 exceeded 1,600 miles per hour. Yet it was able to support infantry in combat zones at speeds as low as 200 knots. (Landing approach speed is approximately 135 knots.) It had an effective combat range of 850 miles (without refueling).

Cunningham, reaching for Mach 1, had the speed advantage. He was opening on the 19s and closing on 112's MiG. But 112 would have to break soon. Cun-

Lt. Randy Cunningham (left) and LtJG Willie Driscoll return to USS *Constellation* 10 May 1972 after rescue from Tonkin Gulf. Pair ejected from F-4J NG 100, which had been hit by SAM. Photo: Tailhook

With adrenalin *still at max*, *Cunningham* debriefs *fellow* VF-96 squadron-mates in ready room aboard USS *Constellation* following his rescue and victory over North Vietnam's leading ace, Col. Tomb. Photo: USN/Tailhook

ningham could feel the MiG pilot's finger settling on the trigger. He tightened his turn to stay with 112.

The 19s on his tail instantly pulled their noses into him and began firing. Cunningham straightened his ship and opened on the MiGs again. This couldn't last much longer, he thought, as the 21s above him coolly waited.

Suddenly, Showtime 112 broke starboard, swinging the MiG-17 wide through his six o'clock. Cunningham instinctively gave the Phantom some rudder and squeezed off his second Sidewinder. The missile came smoothly off the rail and accelerated ahead at Mach 3, stalking the MiG.

The 17 disengaged and tried to evade the highballing white plume of death. But the Sidewinder had a good track and stuck with the MiG. The missile exploded into the communist aircraft and knocked off its tail, causing the MiG to roll out of control. The pilot ejected. MiG number two.

The MiG-21s cruising overhead saw Cunningham brazenly flame their comrade. The communist pilots, obviously indignant at his behavior, rolled in and began wildly maneuvering for firing position. Cunningham and Driscoll took one look around, saw the sky filled with MiGs, disengaged and headed 171 degrees, accelerating for "feet wet." Fuel Remaining was critical.

Still on a heading of 170, Showtime 100 unexpectedly met a third MiG-17 head-on. Unknown to either Cunningham or Driscoll, this MiG-17 was piloted by the legendary NVAF ace, Col. Tomb — and he wanted Showtime 100 for his 14th kill.

The strike group was approaching feet wet — except for seven Showtime F-4s still engaging MiGs over the target. Cunningham centered the Phantom's nose on Tomb's MiG and headed directly into the North Vietnamese ace, attempting to force him to break off. The MiG's 37mm cannons erupted into the F-4's flight path and a surprised Cunningham pitched up into the vertical.

Continued on page 76

"GEAR set, Tomcat. Clear deck!"

Standing on the landing-signal-officer's platform, we watched an F-14 swing-wing fighter turn into the groove over the churning white wake. USS *Ranger* (CV-61) was conducting flight operations off the California coast, steaming under a brilliant July sky. Her squadrons came aboard one at a time, and the Tomcats were first in the daily air plan.

Following the talker's confirmation of a clear deck, the big Grumman continued its approach, nose up, wings extended. Seconds later it crunched into the arresting wires scant yards from where we stood, rapidly decelerating from 130 knots.

The wind, the noise, the colors and the hardware all combined in an awesome display. Some carrier sailors may grow accustomed to such things, but it's difficult to imagine, for the routine is endlessly fascinating. And thanks to the combined efforts of the ComAirPac (Commander Air Pacific) public relations office and the Tailhook Association, SOF was allowed to view the operation close-up for a few days. During our visit back in 1980 *Ranger* proudly described herself as "Top Gun of the Pacific Fleet."

At that time the man behind the trigger was Capt. Roger Box. Since promoted to rear admiral, Rog Box is a bespectacled, friendly former fighter pilot who flew F-4 Phantoms for years. Though the job of running a strike carrier has as much prospect for ruining a career as furthering it, Box was relaxed and, to outward appearances, almost casually in control on the bridge. In a laid-back manner, he talked as readily of the social whirl in Sun Valley as he did of commanding 5,000 men aboard one of the most prestigious targets afloat.

But for a career professional, this is the major step and the major stumbling block — to flag rank. Nobody gets more than one chance to do it

SOF Aboard the USS *Ranger*

TOP GUN OF THE PACIFIC

Text & Photos by Barrett Tillman

ABOVE: *Ranger* with escort vessels. RIGHT: During recovery, the LSO platform gets crowded. Standing in front are the air wing LSOs, talking to approaching pilots while holding the wands which can activate the "wave-off" lights if necessary. Standing behind them are landing signal officers from the air wing's various squadrons.

right, and all it takes is one uninterested 18-year-old to wash the two stars of a rear admiral down the drain. Good men, competent shiphandlers, have taken early retirement as the result of a foul-up by some anonymous sailor belowdecks, or an order misinterpreted by a junior officer.

But the captain of a warship has more on his mind than being a seagoing warrior. He is also a diplomat — or at least he is expected to be. A warship is perhaps the most visible manifestation

AIR EXPERT ON BOARD

Barrett Tillman's work has appeared several times in past issues of SOF (See "Down But Not Out," SOF, July '80, and "Sharpshooting With Chairman Jeff," SOF, May '81). A military and aviation historian, Tillman's interest in airplanes has been lifelong. He learned to fly at age 16, and together with his father (who was a USMC divebomber in WWII) maintains a restored Navy N3N biplane.

A 1971 graduate from the University of Oregon with a bachelor's degree in journalism, Tillman has had over 80 magazine articles published in North America and Europe. He has also written four books on the operational histories of WWII naval aircraft.

Recently relocated from Oregon to Mesa, Ariz., Tillman is now employed as editor-publisher of the Champlin Fighter Museum Press. The museum itself features fighter aircraft from 1914 to the Korean War, and currently has 26 planes on display. As for the publishing side of the business, Tillman will be in charge of editing upcoming books on fighter aircraft, aces, squadron histories, etc.

Tillman's aircraft expertise is welcomed by SOF. His coverage provides a concise look at the complexities of life and operation on board the aircraft carrier, USS *Ranger*.

of a nation's foreign policy, and visitors are frequent. In 1978, ***Ranger*** received a delegation from Communist China, headed by Vice Premier Geng Biao.

"The old gentleman seemed truly impressed," said Capt. Box. Other ***Ranger*** personnel noted that, considering the ship is an "instrument of imperialism," the Chinese showed singular interest in the hardware.

Once settled in the chief petty officers' quarters, we began to look around. A quick glance at the crew's quarters convinced me that the CPOs had it good. My mentor was Bob Lawson, editor of ***The Hook***, a quasi-official quarterly publication dealing with the carrier navy. Lawson retired as a chief photographer, and slumping in his bunk brought him memories of 26 years in harness. Humming "Back in the Saddle Again," he was quickly asleep. He makes two or three carrier trips a year for ***The Hook***, so he has never been far away from the business.

It's no secret that the chiefs run the Navy. They're the vital link between officers and lower enlisted men, with a foot in both worlds. According to custom, they enjoy certain privileges, not the least of which is good food. The chiefs are allowed to pay their mess personnel a fee in addition to their standard salary — it averaged about three dollars per month per member of the CPO mess in 1980. With this added incentive, the CPOs' cooks produce far better fare than that forced upon the officers and enlisted men. In fact, many a newly-minted ensign has been known to hang around the CPO wardroom, hoping some sympathetic chief will invite him to dinner. For that matter, so have lieutenants and commanders.

And there are the benefits which sailors have always known. A carrier is inevitably a noisy place to work, any time of day. But there are those rare nights when a man can go topside for a little quiet under the stars and watch the moon rise. The scuttling clouds, the fluorescence in the wake, all make it seem worthwhile. Sailors still speak of such moments and treasure them.

"Yeah," said one 20-year man, "until some snot-nosed little creep comes along with his portable tape recorder playing 'Light my Fire'."

We didn't get to an officers' mess during our limited time at sea, but we did receive a copy of the S-5 brochure. Wardroom regulations and customs are well-entrenched in the Navy, the most traditional of all the services. The attitude is summed up in one short paragraph: "One of the oldest and best customs observed on Navy ships is that religion, politics and ladies should not be discussed in a gentlemen's mess."

Does this stricture apply today? We aren't sure, but at least one experienced observer said, "Hell, I hardly ever heard anybody talk about anything ***but*** religion, politics and women in the wardroom. Though not in that order, of course."

I REMEMBER THE *RANGER*

by Bob Poos

Once, for a two-week period while an AP combat correspondent in Vietnam, I drew the assignment lusted for by every wire-service combat reporter: covering the Seventh Fleet. That was not dangerous, you see, like touring War Zone C with 173rd Airborne Herd. I had been doing that for what seemed like a lifetime — for some people it was.

Ed White, the AP Bureau Chief, knew I was dirty, tired, malnourished and, above all, scared. So he sent me out to cover the fleet. Ed is like that.

It was wonderful. I was treated like royalty and I got to ride on ships of all description: carriers, destroyers, a cruiser, once a resupply ship that carried fresh food and boasted a large banner inscribed: "We Slip The Meat to the Fleet."

Among the most interesting of all was the *Vesuvius*, an ammunition-carrying cargo ship — all of them were named after volcanoes for obvious reasons. Its crew was the most professional and businesslike I had yet seen — and the U.S. Navy was very good in those days.

Its cargo included everything from .50 caliber and 20mm to the biggest bombs carried on Navy and Marine attack planes to nuclear devices — I wasn't supposed to know that.

One day the *Vesuvius* pulled alongside the USS *Ranger*. The *Ranger* crew obviously was as good at what it did as the men aboard the *Vesuvius*. A team of real pros at work. The deck forces busied themselves shooting lines and such back and forth and rigging a complicated arrangement of slings to transfer the dangerous cargo.

Everything went along without incident or hitch — except those used in the rigging work.

As the work progressed, the ship's band suddenly burst into the *William Tell Overture* and out of a hatch popped a man clad in a black cowboy suit complete with buscadero holsters and sixguns, waving a white Stetson and wearing the little black mask of the legendary cowboy hero. Behind him came two other men wearing one of those horse costumes that used to be seen in vaudeville.

The cowboy climbed aboard and they all went prancing off to the strains of *William Tell*.

The *Vesuvius*' ammunition officer concluded his duties and leaned alongside me on the port taffrail.

As the two vessels finished their chore and the *Ranger* started to pull away, every sailor and Marine not working lined her rail and waved their hats, the cowboy and his mount right in the center.

"There she goes," said the ammo officer proudly and perhaps a bit wistfully, "The old 'Lone Ranger,' best god-damn ship in this man's — or any other's — Navy."

Naval officers serving aboard a ship don't very often say that about another.

Every warship has a main battery, and *Ranger's* is Air Wing Two. The wing consists of nine squadrons or portions of squadrons. And since an attack carrier's reason for being is to launch bombers, CVW-2's three strike squadrons form the core of the ship's offensive punch. These are two Vought A-7 outfits, Attack Squadrons 25 and 113, plus the Grumman A-6 Intruders of VA-145, including a few tanker models. The A-7s, aided by the Intruders, offer a round-the-clock strike capability, and an all-weather potential with the A-6s.

Strike escort and task force air defense are provided by two F-14 squadrons, VF-1's Wolfpack and the Bounty Hunters of VF-2. This marks the first time that a *Forrestal*-class carrier has embarked Tomcats as part of an assigned air wing. Before, "car-quals" and training cruises involved swing-wing fighters aboard older carriers; *Ranger* is the first of her type to take the radical Grummans on a deployment.

The Tomcat is undeniably the glamor-puss of Naval Aviation. With its ultra-sophisticated weapons system, variable-sweep wing and wide speed range, it represents state-of-the-art technology. The fire-control system, for instance, can track up to 24 airborne targets simultaneously and receive instant information on additional targets via data-link from E-2 early warning aircraft. The Phoenix missile system has reportedly scored five kills of six shots on drone targets at distances in excess of 100 nautical miles — from one F-14. Other armament includes Sidewinder heat-seeking and Sparrow radar-guided missiles, plus a 20mm Gatling gun.

However, the F-14 has had problems. Not the least of these is the TF-30 engine, for Congress refused to buy the larger turbofans for which the Tomcat was designed. Grumman was in financial trouble as a result of cost overruns early in the F-14 project, and the problem of powerplants remains.

After landing, an F-14 of Fighter Squadron Two is tended by deck hands.

One Tomcat pilot, pressed on the subject, admitted that the F-14 can't compete with the Air Force's F-15 above 20,000 feet in a dogfight. The Eagle, like most land-based fighters, is lighter than its carrier-borne counterpart and possesses the F-100 engine which the Navy wanted for the Tomcat. However, the F-15 lacks the Grumman's versatile missile system, particularly the Phoenix's range, and F-14 jocks see their superior weapons as the key to success and survival.

Spare parts have also been items of Tomcat news — or, more accurately, lack of news. Congress and the Navy have preferred to buy new airplanes, rather than spares to keep all the available planes flying. It wasn't so much a problem during the Carter administration, when the Navy lost more aircraft in peacetime than appropriations would replace. That situation is remedied, of course, but despite the change in mood the country has experienced since then, military spending is still subject to debate and reduction.

Even with the problems, fighter pilots remain enthusiatic about the F-14. One east-coast F-4 driver looked at the big, glamorous Tomcat and shook his head. "That thing is straight out of ***Star Trek***. Would I love to get my hands on it!" The F-14 pilots I've talked to all seem sold on their bird, partly because of its excellent maneuverability and the invaluable asset of a second set of eyes in the back seat.

Exclaimed one, "I think it's great. I'd love to go to war in an F-14. With our missile system we can tackle a bad guy and leave him dead before he knows we're there."

Opinions seemed divided on the 20mm gun. Several pilots said they don't expect to get close enough to a hostile aircraft to use the Gatling, but others weren't so sure. The lessons of air combat since WWII show that regardless of how fast the aircraft or how sophisticated the missiles, somebody is going to end up hanging in a six-G turn over the weeds, too close to fire a missile. In that case, the gun's worth is obvious.

Apparently the largest concern about the Tomcat's fighting ability is its vertical performance. Its rate of climb is less than most pilots would wish, but the fighter jocks seem optimistic about their chances against the opposition. Today, the potential opponents are largely MiG-21s and 23s. The vaunted cut-and-thrust dogfighter of the Vietnam War, the MiG-17, has largely disappeared. The 21 is some 20 years old — though still a dangerous opponent — but the 23 is a contemporary of the Tomcat. However, all the newest Soviet fighters seem

ABOVE: It's busy on deck as Air Wing Two's A-7 squadrons exercise their planes. RIGHT: Space is at a premium on carriers, regardless of their size. These two A-6Es are parked with their tails clearly overhanging the deck edge in order to provide a bit more room. BELOW: SH-3H Sea King of Helicopter Squadron Two hovers over *Ranger's* flight deck. Choppers serve double duty, providing anti-submarine protection in addition to rescue service.

DRUG ABUSE: REVERSING TREND

by Barrett Tillman

As is often the case, old friends were aboard. During one lunch alone, Bob Lawson, my mentor aboard the *Ranger*, said hello to three former shipmates, and two stopped to talk. They told much the same story, though one was assigned to ship's company and the other to the air wing. The main topic was drug abuse. Official statistics of drug cases per 100 men in each department on one carrier over a 12-month period showed problems in every section. The figures ranged from a low of two percent in safety to nearly 20 percent in the Deck and Flight Departments.

But these reflect only the officially noted cases. The leading chief of one squadron estimated that 70 percent of his enlisted men regularly use everything from marijuana to cocaine. "And the hell of it is," he said, "a lot of these guys are my top maintenance people."

Happily, the situation has improved in the last three years, thanks largely to a tighter approach characterized by the "Not in My Navy" attitude at the top. The Chief of Naval Operations sets policy, and a good many men — officers and enlisted alike — point to the term of Adm. Elmo Zumwalt as the origin of many Navy problems. Others say that the Zumwalt programs were largely beneficial in the long run, but insist that the midst of a shooting war was no time to initiate such changes or soft-pedal discipline.

Adm. T.B. Hayward, who retired as CNO in 1982, receives high marks for his get-tough policy with habitual drug abusers and malcontents. He did much to reverse the dangerous trend of the 1970s, recognizing that no effective military service can operate democratically.

Not in combat.

The chiefs we met still found advantages in life at sea, even in the frustrating environment of the time. "It's a pleasure to work with the young men who are really interested in learning their jobs," the leading chief told me. "One of them makes up for all the duds."

Tomcats prowling up and down the Arabian Sea frontier but, after years without new spare parts, it seemed unlikely that more than a handful were still flying. Furthermore, it was said that numerous maintenance personnel were executed in the religious zealotry which followed the Ayatollah's return. At least a few F-14s were employed in the early stages of the on-again-off-again war with Iraq — apparently as airborne radar stations.

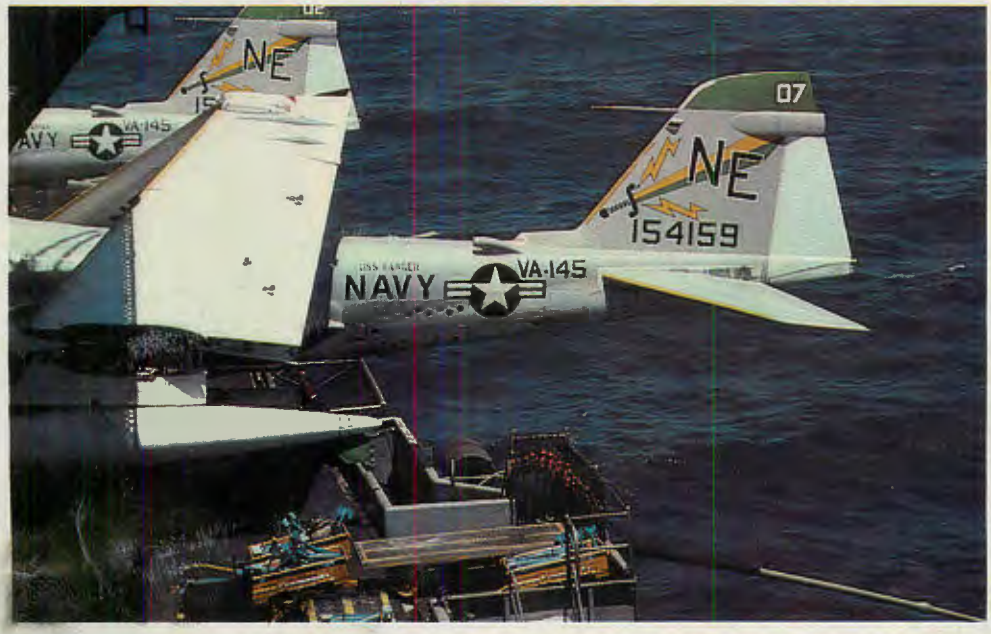
Of larger concern is the intelligence value of F-14 documents which may have fallen into communist hands during the confusion in Iran. Opinions from insiders on this delicate subject have ranged from a confident "Don't worry," to an eyeball-rolling "Don't ask." Some Navy people concede that the Russians may well have flown a Tomcat by now — perhaps even have one in the Soviet Union. But they insist the next-generation avionics in current F-14s largely negates such breaches.

One year later, in August 1981, a pair of VF-41 Tomcats abruptly found themselves in a shootout with Arab-flown aircraft. However, the confrontation occurred not in the Indian Ocean or the Arabian Sea, but over the Gulf of Sidra on Libya's coast.

For reasons which remain unclear, two Sukhoi fighter-bombers engaged a section of *Nimitz* fighters flying standard patrol during a Mediterranean fleet exercise. In a brief combat encounter, the Tomcats each splashed a Fitter with a new-model Sidewinder, the AIM-9L.

That remains the extent of the Tomcat's combat experience — with results unsurprising but satisfying nonetheless. Insiders say that one of the F-14 pilots aptly summarized the situation as he selected HEAT on his armament switch, squeezed the trigger and radioed, "Take that, raghead."

True or not, it spoke volumes.



Two other squadrons rounded out Air Wing Two's tactical organization. One was Early Warning Squadron 117 (VAW-117) with the awkward-looking E-2B Hawkeye ("Hummers," they're called for the droning noise they make in flight) which provides airborne radar coverage beyond radar range of the task force. They can direct F-14s to intercept without having to see the target. The Israeli Air Force employed E-2Cs to excellent effect in the 1982 Lebanon campaign, directing Mirages, F-15s and F-16s to a claimed 65-1 thrashing of the Syrian Air Force.

Electronic warfare becomes more important each year. Probably the best tactical ECM aircraft now flying is Grumman's EA-6B. Developed from the Intruder, the Prowler is in reality a different aircraft, with different engines, two extra seats for electronic-warfare officers and a completely different mission. By jamming enemy radar and communications and penetrating hostile ECM fields, the EA-6Bs could decide a conventional naval battle. Thus, the Rooks of VAQ-137 enjoy an

designed more as interceptors than as air-superiority craft types. The 25, 27 and 28 — according to knowledgeable officers — are fast, high-altitude aircraft not intended for close-in dogfighting.

Ironically, one threat which *Ranger's* aircraft faced upon sailing the Indian Ocean in 1980 was Iranian F-14s. The Shah purchased 80, and 77 were thought to be intact as of that summer. There had been reports of IAF

USS *Ranger* underway.

importance out of proportion to their numbers.

To counter the ever-increasing Soviet submarine threat, Lockheed's S-3A Viking was aboard with VS-37. Like the Prowler, the Viking has a four-man crew with one pilot and three weapons or electronics operators. Its responsibility is anti-submarine warfare in each area of that esoteric field: locating, tracking and destroying hostile subs.

Also engaged in ASW is Helicopter Squadron Two, flying SH-3H Sea Kings. The helos generally provide close-in submarine patrol while the Vikings range farther out, but the choppers also serve as plane-guard and rescue aircraft when necessary.

The mix of *Ranger's* air wing reflected a growing debate in Naval Aviation. Many observers want a return to ASW-dedicated carriers, leaving the big carriers for strike duty and sea control. The versatile, long-lived *Essex*-class ships, which spearheaded the Central Pacific campaigns of WWII, were used as anti-sub platforms before retirement. For a while one or two were slated for return in the ASW role, but the plan fell through. Whether new carriers of "only" 40,000 tons may be built remains uncertain, but the Navy is studying the idea. The immensely sophisticated, and therefore highly expensive, equipment of modern naval warfare is having an effect upon tactics. We simply can't afford to produce — or lose — many $20-million airplanes, so the trend has been toward smaller and more varied tactical formations. Whereas a typical *Essex*-class strike of WWII might involve 30 aircraft or more, an Alpha strike today may number barely half as many. A representative mix would involve eight A-7s and four A-6s escorted by four Tomcats with an EA-6B for good measure. In the prop days, strike missions routinely lasted four hours, but a combination of factors changed this. Current carrier operations are based upon cycle times of about 90 minutes, and a prime consideration is fuel. Consequently, while naval aviators log fewer hours these days, they record more carrier landings. Some insiders think that too much emphasis is placed upon a pilot's arrested-landings rating.

RANGER AT A GLANCE

by Barrett Tillman

CV-61 is the eighth U.S. Navy vessel to bear the name *Ranger*. The first was John Paul Jones' 18-gun frigate launched in 1777.

The seventh was CV-4, the first aircraft carrier designed and built as such from the keel up. Launched in 1931, she led an inglorious career and was scrapped in 1947.

The current *Ranger* has already exceeded her predecessor's service by nine years. Laid down in August 1954, she cost the taxpayers $182,162,000. In August 1957 she was commissioned as third ship of the new *Forrestal*-class. Thus, she's one of the oldest flattops still in service, but her statistics are impressive — not the least of which is her 80,000-ton displacement when fully loaded.

Her angled flight deck measures 1,071 feet long by 270 feet wide, an area of about four acres to operate some 80 aircraft. Her eight boilers deliver the equivalent of over 280,000 horsepower to four 32-foot propellers, producing a top speed of roughly 30 knots.

Most of *Ranger's* career has been spent in the Pacific. She joined the Pacific Fleet directly after commissioning, and began the normal series of deployments, port periods and periodic overhauls common to all carriers. But in 24 years of service, the old girl has experienced some lively times.

It is now all but forgotten, but in 1963 the Russians took delight in overflying U.S. carriers whenever they could. *Ranger* became the sixth flattop subjected to these antics when, in June of that year, six Soviet bombers passed nearby while she steamed 330 miles east of Japan.

Eventually an Ivan became too exuberant at this sport, and caught a wingtip while circling a carrier. He exited in a spectacular splash, and the fun stopped. Since then, Soviet aircraft have generally kept their distance in surveillance flights.

The cold war turned hot in 1964, and *Ranger* went to the South China Sea in company with the anti-submarine carrier *Kearsarge* and a flock of escorts. One of the early Southeast Asian chores was aerial reconnaissance over Vietnam and Laos, and *Ranger's* RF-8 photo Crusaders did much of the work. Recalled her captain at the time: "It was slick. In and out without laying a glove on 'em!"

Therefore, CV-61 was present almost from the beginning of the Vietnam War. In February 1965, she launched some of the first "Rolling Thunder" strikes against North Vietnam, in retaliation for communist military buildup and activity in the region. But it wasn't all one-sided.

In April, *Ranger's* fighters became engaged in the Navy's first aerial combat over Indochina. Four F-4 Phantoms were flying combat air patrol south of ChiCom Hainan Island in the Tonkin Gulf while a bridge strike was in progress south of Hanoi. The Chinese scrambled several MiG-17s, which engaged the Phantoms. One F-4 got a good Sidewinder shot which connected, and the stricken MiG was thought to splash. However, it was officially listed as a probable. One F-4 failed to return, apparently running out of fuel.

Ranger made history again in June 1966 when she launched Skyhawks and Phantoms in the first attack against previously prohibited petroleum storage targets near Haiphong. Other Vietnam cruises continued through the remainder of the war.

Ranger is likely to remain active for some time. She's scheduled for extensive modernization later in this decade (it's cheaper to overhaul an existing ship than build a new one). And if past experience is any indication, she'll steam the deep, blue waters of the Pacific for years to come.

since in some cases it tends to overshadow other important aspects of the job. They claim that tactics and other branches of airmanship suffer when an aviator's efficiency is judged largely on his "traps."

There are other, deeper dissatisfactions. The Navy has recently experienced aviation-retention problems; in one four-year period only about 28 percent of the pilots remained in the service. Back-seaters and other non-pilots average about two-thirds retention, but the men behind the stick find commercial airlines alluring. One can hardly blame them. Aside from better pay, there is much more free time and only a fraction of the family separation.

However, another factor figures prominently in the picture and it has little to do with family or money. It comes under the heading of "job satisfaction." I've lost track of the number of aviators who have said, "Hey, I don't want to be CNO [Chief of Naval Operations]. I just want to fly the damned airplane." But unrelated responsibilities have been heaped upon junior and middle-grade officers — particularly the "people programs" of the Zumwalt years. Counseling and other sociological chores are resented by many aviators who feel unjustly burdened with jobs which have nothing to do with preparing to fight a war. So they have left the service in distressing numbers.

The situation has improved in the past two years, for a variety of reasons. Fewer airline jobs has a lot to do with it, but greater Navy awareness of the problem also affects the retention picture. All ranks and MOS positions are subject to poor retention, and pay raises — badly needed for years — only began to close the gap after the 1980 elections. The situation may not be characterized as good, but it is fortunately getting better.

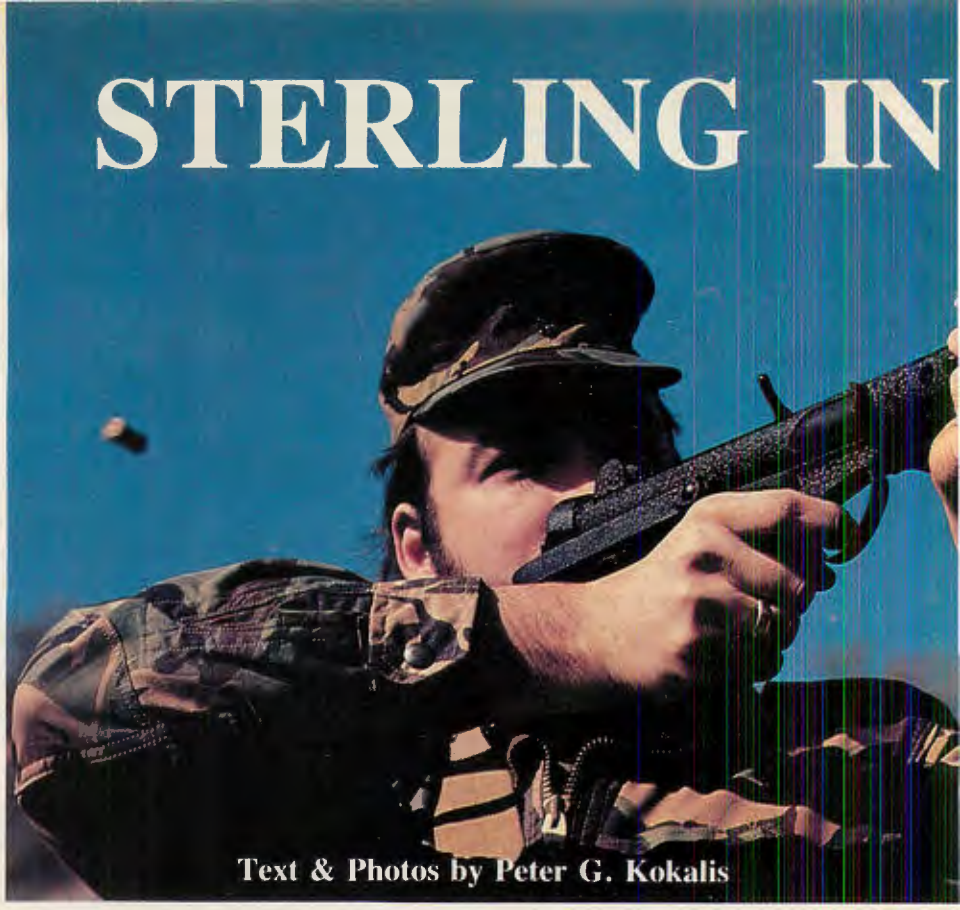
Still, flying off the boat is what *Navy Air* is all about. And while it is true that launch and recovery are a means to an end — accomplishment of the mission — they possess a glamor and fascination all their own. *Ranger* during our visit was blessed with a dedicated, skilled flight-deck crew. While we were aboard, every launch went exactly on schedule. It was as if the catapult officer were standing there, waiting for his watch to tick off the precise second. Most launches involved small tactical formations including F-14s, A-6s, A-7s and usually some S-3s and E-2s.

Launch is by catapult, both from the portside angled deck and forward off the bow. The aircraft are towed or taxied into position and affixed to the cats while the jet-blast deflectors are raised. Next, the engines are run up to military power. Then, satisfied all is ready, the cat officer at each station queries the pilot by visual signal. The pilot smartly salutes, braces his helmet against the headrest and waits for the shot.

Seated in the middle of the deck, amidst the noise and violence and seeming confusion, is the green-jerseyed sailor who actually sends each plane on its way. Working at a pop-up console normally stowed flush with the deck, he watches the launch officer's hands. When the cat officer kneels low and jabs his arm forward — like a fencer thrusting below an opponent's blade — the crewman pushes the button. Two seconds later, 35 tons of airplane wings off the deck under 4½ Gs acceleration as the powerful steam catapult surges forward. Even with locked brakes, an aircraft would be shot into the air.

Continued on page 71

STERLING IN



Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

WHATEVER you want to call it—the Patchett, Sterling, L2A3 or Mark 4 — this excellent British 9mm Parabellum submachine gun has been around for more than 40 years, but only now has it become available in quantity in the United States. Imported exclusively by Lanchester U.S.A., Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 47332, Dallas, TX 75247), the Sterling submachine guns are manufactured by Sterling Armament Company, Ltd. in Dagenham, Essex, England.

During World War II, Sterling manufactured the Lanchester MkII submachine gun for the British Navy (a copy of the German MP28II, which in turn was a further modification of the MP18I designed by Hugo Schmeisser in the late 1920s). The Lanchester was heavy and expensive, doomed to early replacement by the lighter and more economical STEN. Altogether a total of 3,750,000 STENs were produced between 1941 and late 1945, but were never deemed totally satisfactory. Efforts to develop more reliable designs commenced during WWII.

In September 1942, George William Patchett of Sterling submitted a submachine gun to the British Army for trial. At most, a hundred of these guns were delivered before the war ended and a few may have been tested in combat. Development of Patchett's submachine gun continued after the war and a series of competitive trials between it and a dozen other contenders were held between 1945 and 1953. After large-scale troop trials with the Patchett, it as finally adopted in 1953 and given the designation L2A1.

The Sterling submachine guns are, without doubt, the most expensively and finely made weapons in their class. The quality control standards to which they are held more than surpass all possible requirements.

The bolt is machined, not cast, out of ordnance steel. Sixty separate machine operations are required. Many of its small parts are made of forgings which have been precision machine-finished. The use of sheet-metal stampings has been limited to components such as the folding stock and the magazine. The close fit and close tolerances found on this weapon are astounding. The folding stock, for example, must be broken in by repeated manipulation before it will operate smoothly.

The L2A1 submachine gun as originally adopted included certain components designed to ease disassembly. The grip screw and retracting handle were combined to form an Allen key for removal of the barrel screws and the spring block at the rear of the bolt included a drift punch for removing the extractor pin.

Although the basic Sterling design has not been changed, improvements have been made in production techniques and two distinct variants can be noted.

The L2A2 incorporated improvements gleaned from field experience. The chamber was modified for improved feeding, the folding stock strengthened and the tools included with the L2A1 eliminated. Both the L2A1 and L2A2 are referred to as the Mark 3 by the Sterling Company.

The L2A3 (Sterling's Mark 4) was swiftly adopted in 1954 and remains essentially the same after almost 30 years. Current spare parts will fit any Mark 4 ever made. The L2A3 differs from its predecessors in the following way: The butt stock was again redesigned, the trigger guard was removable for winter use, the front sight was made adustable, the chamber modified to NATO standards and minor changes were made on other parts.

The Sterling submachine gun is blowback-operated and fires from the open bolt. The bolt has a fixed firing pin and rounds are fired by advanced primer ignition. The bolt is unique. It features four transverse ribs machined from its sides. The sharp edges of these ribs cut away fouling and debris as the bolt reciprocates within the receiver tube. Material picked up by this process is gradually removed via an open notch cut below the barrel's chamber face and a hole at the bottom of the receiver's end cap.

A spring-loaded pin, located inside the bolt body, prevents misassembly of the weapon: The retracting handle cannot be reinserted until this pin has been pushed forward by the center pin on the recoil spring assembly. This ensures the retracting handle's passage through a hole in the center pin, firmly tying the bolt and recoil spring assembly together.

The L2A3's recoil spring assembly consists of four units: the previously mentioned center pin, an inner and outer recoil

ABOVE: Test-firing semi-auto Mark 6 Carbine, Marty Hart wears Canadian current-issue para smock and Brit seven-mag Landing-Party Chest Pouch, worn in Falklands War. ABOVE INSET: Sterling

VESTMENT

Famous British Weapons Now Readily Available in U.S.

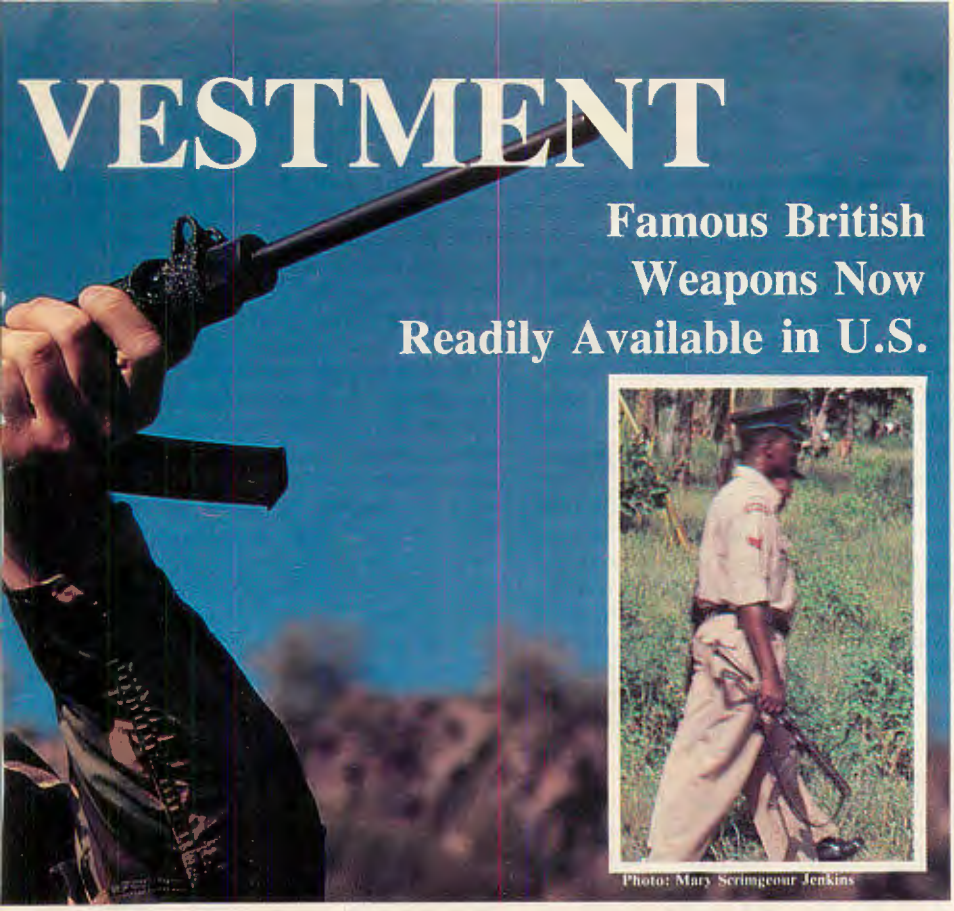


Photo: Mary Scrimgeour Jenkins

SMGs, here carried by cop in Mombassa, Kenya, find favor worldwide. BELOW: Al Nordeen in Waffen SS look-alike 1978 Danish test-pattern tries ultra-quiet L34A1. BOTTOM: Controllable, reliable L2A3.

spring and a middle housing which connects the two springs. This arrangement, though expensive, increases reliability with all types of ammunition. The outer spring absorbs most of the recoil produced by soft to medium loads, while the inner spring compresses fully only when really hot ammo is fired.

The extruded, ventilated receiver tube has two finger guards mounted on the right side, one just forward of the ejection port and one aft of the muzzle. Useful additions — sliding the hand rearward over the ejection port has produced many a malfunction with the STEN and moving the supporting hand forward, past the muzzle, can result in some damage to that limb.

The magazine well has been carefully oven brass-brazed to the left side of the receiver tube. The 34-round curved magazine is of the modern two-position feed type. Easy to load by hand, no special tool is issued or required. The magazine's forward lip serves as a feed ramp. Sterling Armament's magazine body is constructed of four pieces of spot-welded sheet metal, while that fabricated at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Fazackerly is a two-piece unit.

The magazine follower of both is unique. Instead of the usual sheet-metal platform, the follower is composed of two offset roller bearings. Once again, quite expensive to produce, but another keen edge in reliability. The heavy, reliable magazine coil spring is circular rather than the usual rectangular configuration.

Magazines for the Canadian C1 SMG (a slight modification of the L2A3 made by Canadian Arsenals, Ltd.), hold only 30 rounds and employ a conventional magazine follower. The Canadian C1 magazine can be fired in the L2A3, as can the 34-round Australian F1 SMG magazines.

Contrary to the advice of *Jane's*, the 32-round STEN and 50-round Lanchester magazines, which will fit in the Sterling magazine well, should not be used. Their angle of feed is incorrect and premature detonation is quite possible, especially in the full-auto guns.

The L2A3 barrel is only 7.8 inches long. It has six grooves and a right-hand-twist with one turn in 9.84 inches, about normal for 9mm Parabellum. The barrel is firmly seated inside the receiver housing and held in place by two three-sixteenths-inch Allen screws attached through its mounting bar at the muzzle end. It is not normally removed when field-stripping the gun.

The front blade sight is adjustable for zero. The rear peep sight is of the flip type, with apertures for 100 and 200 meters. The total sight radius is 16.1 inches.

The Sterling's trigger assembly is nicely positioned, under and immediately to the rear of the magazine well. The balance characteristics are excellent. The reinforced, impact-resistant, one-piece, black plastic pistol grip is both the correct size and shape. The grip-to-receiver angle is perfect, and the selector lever is easily manipulated by the thumb of the firing hand. The three selector positions are marked "SAFE," "I" for semiautomatic fire and "34" for full-auto. The positioning sequence is proper, as pushing the lever forward (the natural reaction) places the weapon first in the semiauto mode and finally into full-auto.

The trigger mechanism is unitized and can be removed easily. Merely turn the trigger group retaining pin slothead in line with the word "FREE" on the right side of the pistol grip and drive out the pin with the nose of a bullet. Pull the trigger back toward the rear, disengage it from the step in the receiver, swing outward and remove. The trigger guard is removed from the group by pushing out its forward pin, swinging the guard downward and unhooking it from the underplate.

Believe it or not, this procedure is easier done than described.

When the selector is set to "SAFE," the disconnector remains frozen and the bolt cannot move forward or be retracted rearward. When the selector lever is set to "34," its spindle is rotated forward out of contact with the disconnector. When the trigger is pulled, the nose of the sear is lowered off the bolt's bent and the bolt will continue to reciprocate as long as the trigger is pulled and cartridges remain in the magazine. When the selector is set to "I," the selector spindle's inner arm rotates upward to meet the disconnector. When the trigger is pulled the sear comes down as before and the bolt flies foward. Now, however, the disconnector rotates clockwise, causing its nose to slip off the spring-loaded sear which rises to stop the bolt's travel.

The Sterling's folding stock was obviously designed by a mad German scientist held captive in a British laboratory after the war: Its Teutonic complexity boggles the mind. A verbal description of its operation reads like a set of computer software instruction. Suffice to say, if its use can be anticipated, the stock should be extended well beforehand. In fact, British Army regulations specify the stock to be extended at all times while in a combat zone. However, it is rugged and secure, and once extended offers a firing platform second only to the wood stocks found on submachine guns of earlier vintage.

With its stock folded, the L2A3 measures 19 inches. While slightly longer than the Beretta M12S and the UZI, this is still shorter than the H&K MP5A3.

All the Sterling submachine guns are exterior-finished with an extremely tough and durable crackle texture, wood-epoxy-resin baked enamel over phosphate. In addition to the protection it offers against wear and rust, the wrinkle texture reduces glare.

The Mk 4 and Mk 6 Sterlings are fitted with a bayonet stud that accepts the No. 5 blade bayonet originally issued with the .303 Enfield No. 5 rifle (the so-called "Jungle Carbine"). Bayonets on submachine guns are an anachronism that can be justified only for shoving prisoners around or riot control. At least the No. 5 bayonet is better than earlier Enfield spike bayonets. It is a passable fighting knife and can be used to open 55-gallon drums. The British spike bayonet was never more than a modified tent peg.

The Sterling's web sling is slightly wider than the STEN's. The rear is attached to a non-rotating swivel on the end cap. Adjustment is by brass buckle and a miniature Enfield-type brass loop. The non-rotating, spring-loaded brass front hook is attached through two of the receiver's vent holes to the left and rear of the front sight. Not as good as the Beretta M12S sling, but it will do and it's better than most.

I've fired and observed many thousands of rounds through Sterling submachine guns and I have never witnessed a single malfunction — except as a consequence of damaged magazines or defective surplus ammunition. The cyclic rate is 550 rpm and that is as it should be: very controllable in every firing position, accurate and exhibiting high hit probability at the appropriate ranges. This superbly engineered, beautifully executed, rugged, reliable weapon is all one could desire in a submachine gun, and then some. Those not accustomed to the STEN may have some difficulty adjusting to the side-mounted position of the magazine, but it allows the lowest possible prone firing position.

Reliable intelligence sources have indicated that the U.S. government has recently made undisclosed purchases of Sterling submachine guns — both the L2A3 and the L34A1 suppressed version — with delivery in Germany and pickup by unmarked U.S. Army trucks. I can only hope the CIA is rebuilding its sadly neglected paramilitary potential.

During the early 1960s, the British General Staff required a weapon of semi-automatic and full-auto capability to meet a standard of: "Mechanical noise to be unheard at 30 meters and not to be recognized as a firearm at 50 meters." Starting with the L2A3, George W. Patchett began the research and design efforts necessary to meet the above specifications in 1963. After four years of development and extensive trials, the L34A1 (Sterling-Patchett SMG 9mm Mark 5 — Silenced) was adopted by the British government and full-scale production began.

Effective sound suppression of firearms must address three specific areas of concern. First, if the projectile's velocity exceeds the speed of sound (1,089 feet per second at 32 degrees at sea level), there will be a miniature sonic boom downrange. Most 9mm Parabellum muzzle velocities vary considerably, depending on the type of bullet, place of manufacture and length of barrel. However, almost all are slightly above the speed of sound.

The L34A1 makes use of a so-called "combination suppressor." It incorporates both a muzzle suppressor that extends beyond the end of the barrel and a barrel suppressor that envelopes the entire barrel assembly. Downrange "crack," or "ping," is eliminated in the L34A1 by 72 small port holes drilled into the rifling of the barrel which divert enough of the propellant gasses to drop the projectile's velocity below the sonic level before it leaves the muzzle.

The second, and by far the loudest sound produced by a firearm is the muzzle blast created by the shock waves produced by the sudden expansion of the hot propellant gasses as they encounter the atmosphere at the muzzle's end. It is suppressing this sound to which firearm engineers must direct their greatest efforts.

Sound suppressors are applications of the General Gas Law. For all ideal gasses the equation states that pressure equals temperature multiplied by a constant divided by volume. As muzzle blast is a consequence of relatively high-pressure gasses leaving the barrel, reduction of this pressure immediately before exit — by increasing the volume or decreasing the temperature or both — will reduce the sound.

The L34A1's muzzle blast is effectively diminished since the gasses escaping through the 72 barrel ports pass into a ported diffuser tube and through its holes into an expanded metal wrap, to be eventually contained by the suppressor casing. These gasses seep forward partially through holes in the front barrel support and gun body, and partially by returning into the barrel. By the time the projectile exits the muzzle, most of the gas column has been broken up.

The gasses proceed to move forward, where they are further broken up by the swirling turbulence imparted by the muzzle suppressor, which is a spiral diffuser consisting of a series of discs held in place by tie rods which run from the muzzle's end cap to the front support. The gasses finally pass into the forward expansion chamber, where the leading gasses are deflected rearward by the special interior profile of the front cap, similar to Doc Dater's MAC-END (see "Full Auto," SOF, August '82, and "Doc Dater's Deadly Devices," SOF, November '81), again assisting the gas column's break-up.

The third sound, usually ignored, is the noise of the action itself, or "bolt clatter." Because the L34A1 is so effective in lowering the bullet's velocity, the system's energy output is reduced to such a level that the recoil impulse on the bolt is far less than normal. The inner return spring, center pin and middle housing of the

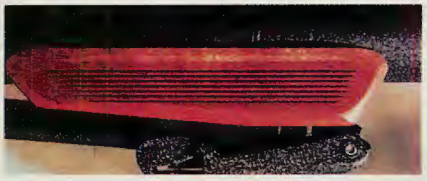
STERLING SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber	L2A3 (Mk4) SMG	L34A1 (Mk5) Suppressed SMG	Mk6 Carbine
LENGTH			
butt folded	19 inches	25.75 inches	27 inches
butt extended	27 inches	33.75 inches	35 inches
WEIGHT			
weapon only	6 lbs.	7 lbs., 13 oz.	7.5 lbs.
BARREL			
length	7.8 inches	7.8 inches	16.125 inches
all 6-grove, right-hand twist, pitch of 1 turn in 9.84 inches			
SIGHTS			
front	adjustable blade	adjustable blade	adjustable blade
rear, aperture	100 & 200 meters	100 meters, multi-hole	100 & 200 meters
type		low light level	
CYCLIC RATE	550 rpm	600 rpm	N/A
METHOD OF OPERATION	Blowback, open bolt, fixed firing pin, advanced primer ignition	Blowback, open bolt Fixed firing pin Advanced primer ignition	Blowback, closed bolt, floating firing pin
PRICE	$678	$978	$648
ACCESSORIES:	magazines, 34-rd., $39 and 10-rd., $35; 3-magazine pouch, $28; bayonet & scabbard, $115; 4-color service wall charts, $8.50 each; vehicle mounting bracket, $42; scope mount for Weaver base pistol scopes, $47; Suppressor armorer's kit, approximately $300.		

Blade bayonet from Enfield No. 5 "Jungle Carbine" fits L2A3.

Brass sling-clip rides in ventilation holes in barrel sleeve above left-side-mounted bayonet lug.

Grooved wooden forearm replaces military-issue Nomex cover to protect hand from heat of suppressor can on civilian L34A1.



Multi-holed rear aperture gathers light for low-visibility conditions.

Left to right: Sterling's Mark 6, L2A3 SMG and L34A1 suppressed SMG with 10-round concealment magazine.

L2A3's spring assembly have been eliminated and the bolt itself lightened. The result is the lowest action noise level of any suppressed submachine gun on the market.

As suppressor "cans" give off considerable heat, the commercial version of the L34A1 is equipped with a wooden forearm. British Army L34A1s are supplied instead with Nomex covers in camouflage or winter white.

Operation of the L34A1 is the same as the L2A3, i.e., blowback, advanced primer ignition, firing from the open bolt. The trigger assembly remains the same also. For even greater accuracy and lower noise level, British SAS and Commando units reportedly replace the trigger assembly and bolt group with that of the semiautomatic, closed-bolt Mark 6 Carbine.

The L34A1 has no bayonet lug and the front finger guard has been deleted. The folding stock, front sight and sling are that of the L2A3. A compact 10-round magazine is available to assist concealment on

Continued on page 64

Trigger pack marked "I" for semi- and "34" for full-auto.

L2A3 with inserted Sterling 34-round magazine and 10-round concealment mag to immediate right. STEN 32-round and Lanchester 50 single-feed sticks (below) should not be used.

Carefully machined bolt sports sharp-edged helical ribs which cut away fouling as bolt reciprocates.

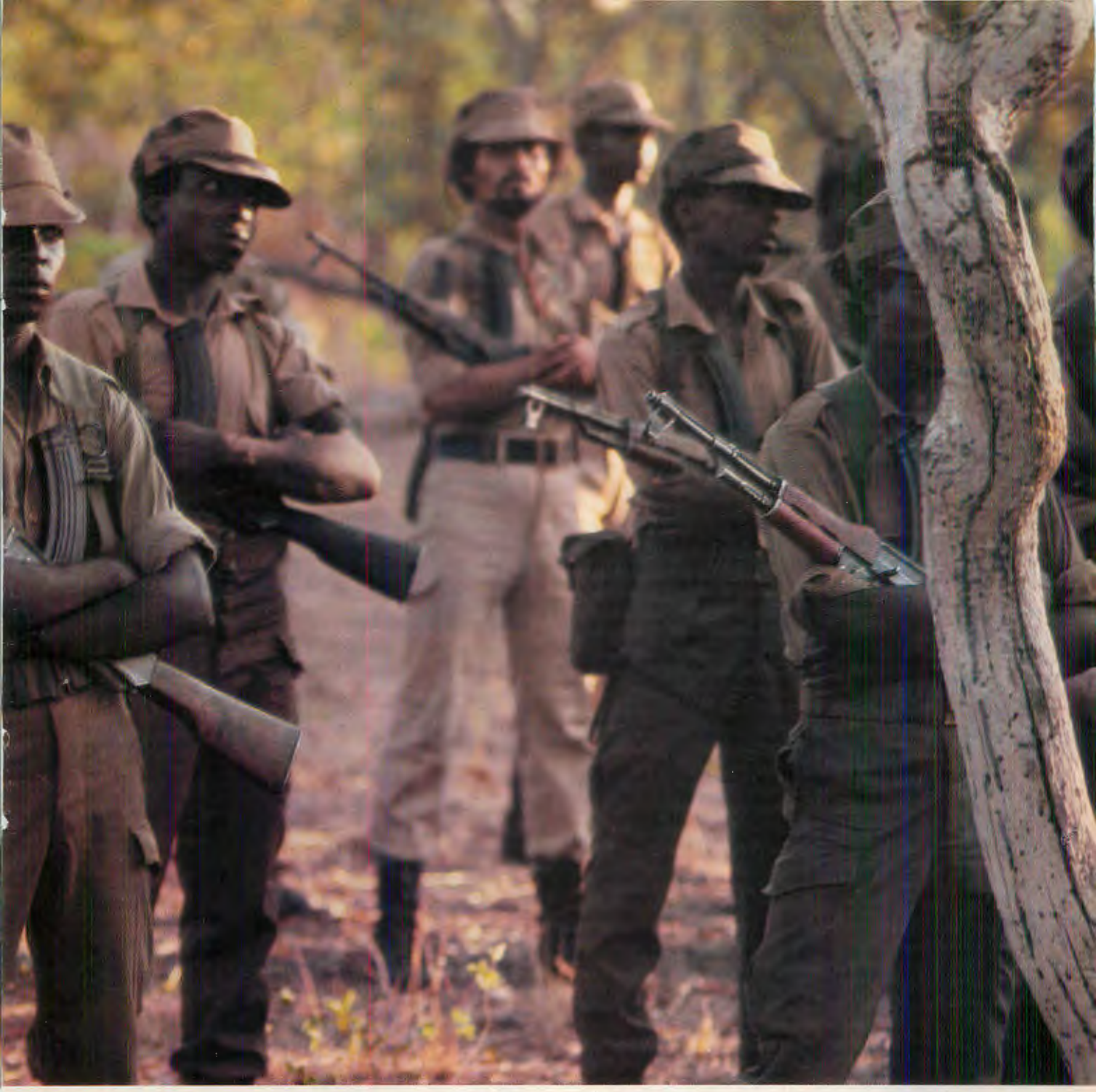
Expensive but reliable roller-bearing follower surmounts sturdy helical spring.

Sterling L2A3 field-stripped, showing unitized trigger group and four-component recoil-spring assembly.

APPOINTMENT IN ANGOLA Part I

SOF Update on the War in Savimbiland

Text & Photos by Rick Venable



Armed with captured weaponry, Savimbi's army stands in formation equipped with Angolan web-gear and uniform. The enemy is the main supplier of the forces of Free Angola, and these soldiers carry old-style wood-stocked AK-47s with the older standard-issue 30-round, ribbed, stamped-steel box magazine.

IN late afternoon our plane touched down and rolled to a stop in bright African sunlight. Just which country we were in isn't important. In the tangled politics of Africa, countries don't always want to advertise whom they are helping: Half the countries on the continent play a double game of publicly denouncing one cause or bush army while privately supporting it. We checked through customs without trouble. Our visa applications in Washington listed us as nature photographers, which accounted for seven cameras between us and 200 rolls of film.

We went downtown and checked into a hotel, which I will call the Safari, as arranged with Savimbi's men in Washington: the best rooms they had. I don't believe in padding expense accounts, but I don't believe in living in tents either, especially

when I am doing slightly hairy stories for magazines. We went to the bar and waited for Savimbi's agents to contact us.

For three days we waited. The bar at the Safari was good, so we didn't mind. My companion's identity is of no particular importance here — I'll just call him Jim. Then on the fourth night, the desk paged me for a telephone call. A thickly accented voice said, "Mr. Venable? This is Raoul. You are with...?" Actually he didn't say Raoul, but the name he did use wasn't his anyway. I named the publication that, theoretically, we were with. He said he would meet us in the lobby in 12 minutes.

After the usual exchange of pass-phrases, Raoul told us how to catch a plane for another country, and then another, a chain which would end with us landing at a crude strip in Angola. He took us to the airport the next morning. We never saw him again.

Somewhat later, on an afternoon with broken thunderstorms covering the sky and gusty winds blowing, we were flying over the Angolan bush in a bucking, bouncing bush plane at an altitude of 50 feet — at least, that's what the pilot said, but I'd guess it was more like 30 at times.

Lightning flickered nearby and the winds were rough. Rain smeared across the windshield intermittently and disappeared. The pilot never said anything about himself, but he had to be good not to splash us across the countryside racing below. The pucker factor gets high when you know you are a wind-shear away from buying it, but nobody seemed upset about it. I think we all knew from experience that fear is useless once you are actually in such a situation.

The pilot didn't take us higher because you can never be sure who is in the bush below with a SAM-7. Angola is wild country these days. Savimbi's men have missiles, and might not have gotten the word that we were coming. SWAPO is active in some areas. The Cubans and the black army out of Luanda also have antiaircraft weapons. At 50 feet, they can't get a lock on you.

And there is a prejudice in these parts about showing up on radar screens. We didn't want a Luandan MiG-21 vectored to us. Whether he could have shot down a maneuverable plane that preferred flying at grasstop level was an interesting question — one that I didn't want answered.

A slight gash appeared in the bush below. Angola is flat and sandy, dotted with trees about 20 feet apart. It all looks the same. We banked sharply toward the strip — just finding it was a neat piece of navigation at low altitude — and swooped immediately into a landing run. As we entered our roll, I saw a group of armed men step from the surrounding growth. Either those are Savimbi's people, I thought, or we are in very deep shit. The rifles were AKs.

We taxied back and Jim got out. The pilot was already checking his magnetos for the flight out. The troops from the woods surrounded the plane, looking neither hostile nor friendly. There were maybe 30 of them. They were very black, and dressed in the usual guerrilla grab-bag of captured Cuban fatigues, old Portuguese stuff gotten god-knows-where, jeans, bush hats of all kinds, bandannas, T-shirts, jump boots, combat boots of three or four armies, etc. The weapons were mostly AKs of various kinds, but one was a Chinese model 56. One fellow carried an M79 bloop tube.

ABOVE: Abdominal surgery in grass-hut hospital. LEFT: Villagers sing "Death to Cubans" to author and friend. RIGHT: UNITA soldiers seem to control the bush as they roam freely through Savimbi-controlled southeastern Angola.

A big fellow in cammies and a red beret with two gold stars stepped forward with a friendly smile. I will call him General Jones. A lot of Savimbi's people have families in the Cuban areas and don't want their names used for fear of reprisal.

"Mr. Venable! Welcome to free Angola. Was your flight comfortable?"

Actually it wasn't, but I didn't say so. He introduced us to Lt. Helper, we'll call him, who was to be our escort. Helper was a young agreeable fellow who spoke decent English.

"Now if you will step this way, gentlemen, we'll get you, how do you say, logged in," said General Jones.

We followed him 20 feet into the bush and got our first lesson in the local war. Beneath a tree was a grass-thatched hut sunk halfway into the ground. We hadn't seen it from the air. Angola *looks* like open country, or at least open enough that hiding would be hard. It isn't. Anything built under a tree is invisible from the air, even if you know where to

look. Not surprisingly, most of Savimbi's buildings are under trees.

Inside the hut it was cool and dim. We sat on chairs made from the same grass-and-branch construction as the hut itself and sipped ***sumo***, the sticky-sweet passion-fruit juice that seems to be the only thing the Angolans drink. A white table cloth gave an air of elegance. Meanwhile, outside the entire population of a neighboring village sang patriotic songs to us. This happened in every village we saw: Everybody came out and sang to us. Sometimes we felt trapped in a musical comedy.

We boarded a pair of Russian-supplied Star trucks, also invisible beneath the trees. For a guy who did his time in 'Nam, there is something deeply satisfying about riding in captured Russian trucks, with an escort of 40 guerrillas with captured Russian rifles. It was almost like seeing the war in Asia from the other side, and it was an eye-opener.

As we roared and bullied our way through the bush, I chatted with Lt. Helper. The Stars are brutal things and don't need roads in the semi-open terrain. Your kidneys pay a price for this versatility.

"We don't like the Stars too much," Helper said. "When they get hot they stop. Sometimes we can't travel in the daytime around noon. The best trucks are the Mercedes, but the Cubans don't have them, so we can't get many."

The troopers with us were alert from habit, but not much worried about ambushes. We were close to territory that is firmly under Savimbi's control. As Helper explained, "The Cubans don't know the bush so they stay on the roads. The Angolans in Luanda's army don't like the Cubans either, so they don't try too hard to find us. Our guerrillas would kill them before they got here anyway."

Something that I could never explain is why Cuban air power isn't a threat to UNITA (the correct acronym for Union for the Total Independence of Angola in Portuguese). Much of our stay would be in the southeastern sector, home of Savimbi's base areas. UNITA obviously controls the southeast: Trucks drive by day without any attempt to stay under cover, and at night with lights. But major bases are large and obvious from the air.

Although I can see why the Cubans can't get at UNITA on the ground, even though there are said to be 20,000 to 40,000 of them, I could never understand why Luanda didn't make occasional bombing runs just to disrupt things and hurt morale. Savimbi's people say that the Russians are afraid of being shot down — that they are trying to keep the war as cheap as possible — but I never saw an anti-aircraft position, and UNITA doesn't have a lot of

"THE Angolans in Luanda's army don't like the Cubans either, so they don't try too hard to find us. Our guerrillas would kill them before they got here anyway."

SAM-7s. Whatever the explanation, we drove openly through the countryside.

Soon the skies were clear and the tsetse flies started to bite. They are over-engineered bugs that don't crush unless you swat hell out of them. A herd of 200 buffalo blocked our way for a few minutes. We finally pulled into a collection of concealed huts that turned out to be a motor pool. I was surprised. I had talked to a friend who had come the same route, more or less, a couple of years before. He had described UNITA as being gutsy, but not having much to work with. In the next two weeks we would see that Savimbi's organization has gotten a lot more sophisticated since then.

For example, Lt. Helper took us through a clearing containing a dozen Russian trucks, including what looked to be about 15-ton models, and led us into the carburetor shop. Several technicians were rebuilding carbs and diesel injectors. In the next hut over, a fellow was hand-polishing crankshaft journals. A metal-working drill press and an arc-welder were in another hut, attached to a big diesel generator — also of East European make. Thank you, Ivan. There was a warehouse of rebuilt parts.

"Sometimes when we get trucks, they are not in very good condition. You know, we shoot them to make them stop," the master mechanic explained to us. "If we have spare parts, we can get them running before the Cubans come back."

We broke for goat meat and bread, while the local village sang to us as usual. It takes a while to get used to having 150 people singing and waving signs reading "Death to the Cubans" while you eat.

The weapons interested me. I was now seeing a broader mixture. For example, there were FNs around, some RPG-2s and a lot of RPG-7s, and an occasional PKM machine gun. The heaviest stuff we saw was Soviet mortars, mostly 82mm, and heavy machine guns in 12.7mm and 14.5mm. UNITA has captured some artillery, but I think they took it mostly because it seemed a waste to leave it, or because they hope to use it later. Right now, in waging what is still mostly a guerrilla war, they can't use it. The Cuban MiGs and helicopter gunships — mostly Mi-8s — make artillery too vulnerable.

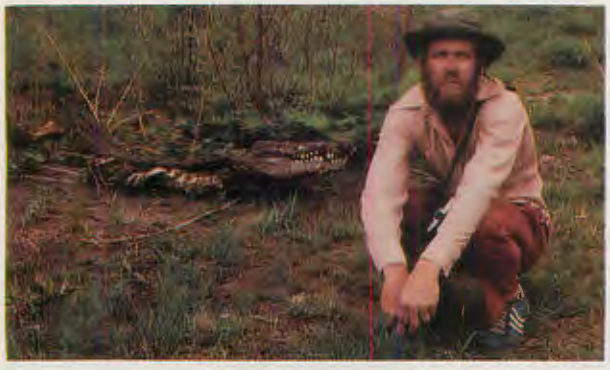
My big question was: Where does the armament come from? Savimbi's people claim that most of it is captured, with a little being bought on the international arms market. I didn't see anything to contradict this. The M-79s may have come through Cuba by way of North Vietnam, for example, and the FNs may well be captured remnants of Portuguese issue. I am more inclined to believe UNITA than I would be to trust most guerrilla movements, since they were truthful in everything I could check.

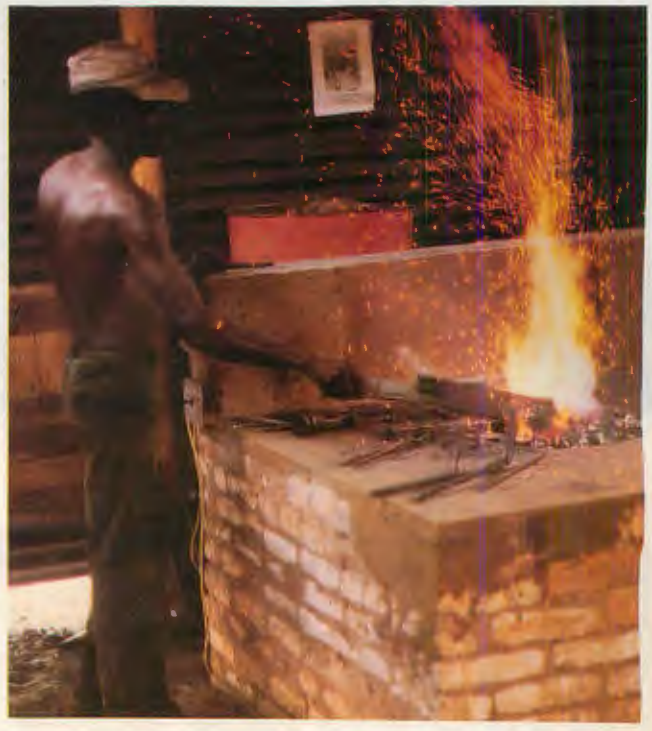
On the other hand, friends of mine in Washington, who watch African wars for organizations who care about such things, think that the South Africans are providing arms. Maybe. And then there are those people who think that a black army can't be good enough to do anything on its own, so South Africa must be running the show. They are wrong. Savimbi may or may not get whatever South Africa captures from SWAPO, but UNITA's troops are clearly competent soldiers.

After leaving the motor pool, we set off for four days of inspecting military camps and friendly villages. When UNITA's troops decide to go

LEFT: UNITA motor-pool — communist-bloc trucks power economy of free Angola: scrap metal for weapons parts and tools, spare parts for other trucks and engines for pumps and generators. BELOW: Captured Russian-supplied Polish Star truck hidden in trees' shade.

ABOVE: UNITA soldier armed with American-made M79 grenade launcher. M79s may have arrived in Angola from North Vietnam via Cuba, or they could be supplied to UNITA by South Africa. LEFT: Camouflaged UNITA guerrillas training in Cuando Cubango Province, Angola. LOWER LEFT: Author Venable takes a moment to digest hasty meal of famous local specialty — croc tartare — before going out in search of story. BELOW: UNITA blacksmith at hearth, reforging parts taken from Russian trucks into tools and weapons for UNITA guerrillas.





somewhere, they just go. Several times we drove 24 straight hours in those godawful Russian trucks. The roads were just tracks in the bush where a truck had been before.

Not all of it was in friendly territory. The troops sat quietly in the back, locked and loaded, eyeing the passing bush. It is home to them. They can see things that a Cuban would never notice, things like a solitary zebra half-hidden at a range of 500 yards. When we stopped to eat, the troops fanned out for a 360-degree perimeter without being told. Then they just sort of disappeared, squatting in the growth — locked, loaded and looking. Don't try to sneak up on these guys unless you are real crafty or bulletproof.

I began to see why the Cubans have a serious problem here. The villages see a lot of UNITA, and obviously like Savimbi's men. Crops in the fields are prospering, which means that the army has enough to eat. The political arm of UNITA knows its stuff. At each village the population would assemble to sing to us. Clearly they are told to do so, but it isn't as artificial as it might sound to an American: These people love to sing, and would just as soon do it to us as for any other reason.

Unusual in Africa, Savimbi trooper carries Hungarian 7.62x39mm AMD-65 assault rifle, variant of AKM. Normal Hungarian issue sports front pistol-grip, here replaced by fore-end from Soviet AK.

Then General Jones would introduce us to the village elders, who would give us a present. (Once it was an incredibly savage-looking chicken that plainly wanted to kill somebody. I motioned the fellow to give it to my friend, Jim: Tactical alertness is a military virtue.) General Jones would then lead the people in a two-minute chorus of "Long live Savimbi! Death to the Cubans!", then grin, wave, and away we'd go. This kind of political technique means that the Luandan army will never get any help hereabouts.

To put it in a sentence, these guys are savvy guerrillas.

One night we pulled into a hospital compound — another collection of grass huts. UNITA has a lot of hut-compounds scattered through the bush that are unoccupied except when a contingent of troops comes through. The hospital was always in use, but the buildings were no more elaborate than usual.

Lions were coughing in the night. They occasionally attack villages, and have been known to jump into the back of a truck and wipe out a platoon. We turned into our assigned hut and took our malaria pills. We never even saw a mosquito, the rainy season not yet underway, but in another week or two malaria would have been certain without pills.

Next morning the director of the hospital came to take us on a tour. It was a strange experience. They have one European-trained surgeon, one microscope and not a hell of a lot else. We watched girls doing blood-types in one hut, competently using the microscope. The recovery ward, a long hut with grass cots, was filled with men with feet blown off by mines, legs shattered by bullets — the usual. One fellow with his face covered in heavy bandages lay quietly in a corner.

"Napalm," the director said. "The Cubans are using more of it. It is the worst kind of wound we treat." Yeah. Bad burns are likely not to make it in the United States. In Angola, you can just about forget it. The treatment in general looked competent, considering the lack of supplies, but the doctors can do only so much without equipment.

He led us into a dirt-floored grass hut where major abdominal surgery was in progress. The surgeon was wearing combat boots and fatigues under his gown. He obviously knew what he was doing. With a lot of wounded, he keeps busy.

Hours later, I asked him how the war was going medically. In so many words, he said lousy, but we get by. "We need antibiotics," he said, "and we need instruments, especially microscopes. We can train people to use them — we already have — but we can't build microscopes. We need surgeons. We need supplies. We need everything."

Poisons are a problem. "When the Cubans know we are going to capture an area, or when they want to drive us off some piece of land, they poison food and the wells. In the hospitals, we get some very sick people this way. The hardest part is determining what kind of poison was used so that we can treat it. No, they are not using poison gas, not yet anyway."

Incidentally, hygiene in UNITA's armed forces is about average for a professional force. Water is boiled. Latrines are deep, about eight feet on a guess, and well covered except for the necessary hole. They are deeply buried after filling. Jim and I ate with the troops for two weeks and never got the trots. The troops all look healthy and fit. The food is almost unbearably boring to a Westerner, consisting of lots of rice and potato gruel, sticky-sweet boiled milk and some game; but it is nourishing.

That night Lt. Helper got on the radio and talked to Jamba, the main base which was next on our itinerary. Savimbi's men have quite a radio net and can get in touch with Europe and the United States without trouble. They got a message through to my wife in two hours, for example. Helper returned and said that Savimbi himself would be in Jamba in two days and wanted to talk with us. That was good news. I had met him before and knew him to be worth talking to. We packed for the trip.

Our last stop before heading out was a village that had something I wanted to see. We pulled into the main area, got sung to by everybody and walked back to a small charcoal forge on the outskirts.

A man in a T-shirt, a well-muscled dude, was pounding a red-hot piece of metal on an anvil: part of the leaf springs from a Russian truck. This is how they make knives in free Angola. In fact, it is how they make just about everything. The Russian truck is the key to the Angolan economy. If the Soviets quit sending them, UNITA would probably collapse. I saw fields being irrigated with pumps powered by motors from Russian trucks.

We watched for a few minutes. Then the blacksmith put down his hammer, got a small knife from a stump nearby and gave it to me. I must have grinned like a possum in a garbage can: I was happy to get something from Ivan that I liked. The blacksmith was so impressed by my pleasure that he offered me an axe made from the same truck.

"Maybe I shouldn't take this," I said. "You probably need them."

"No problem, we have lots of trucks," he answered. I took it.

That night we headed out, Jim and I lying on our backs in the truck beds on a huge piece of foam rubber that, as guests, we apparently rated. We still bounced around like ping-pong balls in a Waring blender, but we were getting used to it. The stars were so bright you could just about read by them. Our piratical band of bush-hatted *guerrilleros* sat along the sides, AKs locked and loaded, smoking or talking quietly. We had come to like them and, I think, they us. The wind was cool with a touch of rain. Angola stretched before us, big and empty. You may not live forever in this racket, but sometimes you live well.

Continued on page 78

"NAPALM," the director said. "The Cubans are using more of it. It is the worst kind of wound we treat."

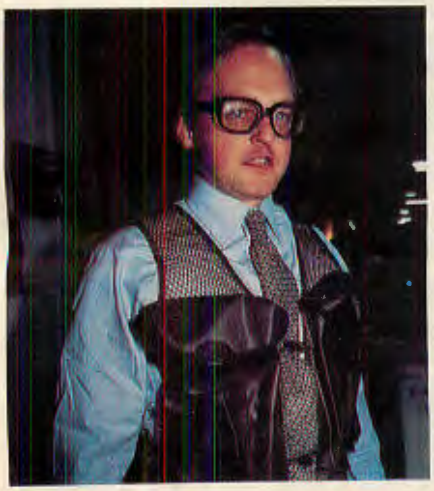
SECOND S.H.O.T.

SOF Looks at Small Arms in Dallas

Text by Peter G. Kokalis
Photos by Bill Guthrie

ABOVE: Beretta's Warren Barron, Robert K. Brown and Peter G. Kokalis (left to right) parlay on new developments in the world of military small arms. RIGHT: Improving the rat trap: Leatherwood's offering of a stainless Ingram. BELOW: Magnum Research showed cutaway Galil, exhibiting Israeli debt to Kalashnikov and Valmet.

BELOW: Author Pete Kokalis shoulders UZI 9mm carbine with Leatherwood ART.

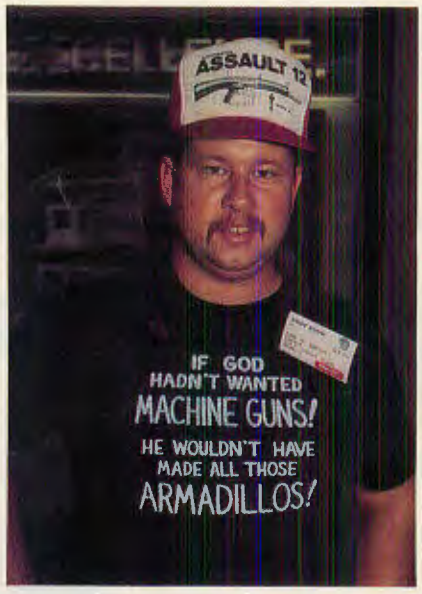


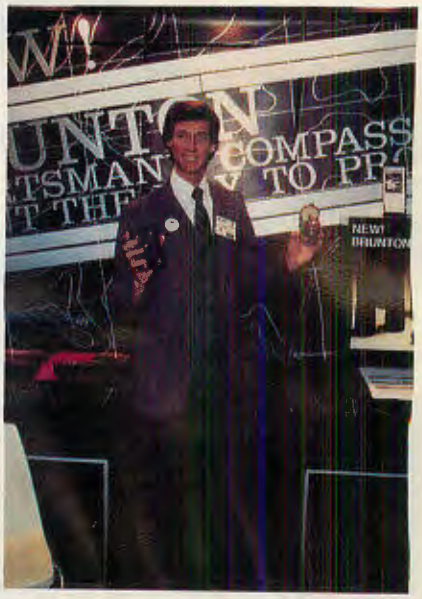
Freddy Markham, marketing director of Survival Aids, Ltd., models SAS assault vest.

LIKE drooling myrmidons, great masses of humanity flow up and down the aisles of the Dallas S.H.O.T. Show past booth after booth. Leering hawkers beckon passersby to view product after product destined for the firearms industry's scrap heap of ill-conceived dreams. We have time for only those new items on the survival and paramilitary market that will really make it — and so do you.

Leading the way was Beretta's AR 70 5.56mm NATO assault rifle, which in its semiautomatic-only form has now achieved BATF approval for importation to the United States. Outward appearance is that of the Stoner 63 series. In operation, the Beretta AR 70 piston is attached to the bolt carrier — again, a Stoner 63 feature. However, the AR 70's bolt is of the two-lug, forward-locking

One of the myrmidons wears Kokalis's family motto.





Well-known to outdoorsmen for the finest compasses, Brunton has expanded its line to include Lakota knives.

type found on the Kalashnikov. Priced at about $985, this finely made Beretta entry into the assault-rifle arena should be as well received here as it has been throughout the rest of the world over the last decade.

Using the same proven design concepts and features built into all its semiautomatic rifles, Heckler & Koch introduced its new HK SL7 in caliber 7.62mm NATO and HK SL6 in 5.56mm NATO. Wooden-stocked and bearing a striking resemblance to the German G43 rifle of WWII fame, these rifles, priced at only $500 retail, will sell briskly. Jumping on the 9mm carbine bandwagon, H&K also displayed the HK 94, a long-barreled, semiautomatic-only version of the illustrious MP5 SMG series.

Steyr's semiautomatic version of the radical and innovative AUG has also been given BATF approval and should be in stock on dealers' shelves soon. Previously described in SOF ("Steyr's Firing Line," April '82), and already in use by the Austrian and Saudi Arabian armies, the STG 77 will be a desired addition to the collections of serious military weapons buffs.

Monster of the midway, at least in weight and price, was the Walther WA 2000 target and sniper rifle. Available in calibers .300 Win. Mag., 7.62mm NATO and 7.5mm Swiss, and weighing in at 17.5 pounds complete with bipod and 2.5X-10X variable Schmidt und Bender scope, the WA 2000 can be delivered to your doorstep for a little over $6,000. Of bullpup configuration, the WA 2000 is gas-operated with a six-lug rotary bolt. The stock can be adjusted in length, height and sideways. Magazine capacity is six rounds. Barrel length is 25 inches and the barrel is held rigid by a unique frame assembly. Felt recoil should be almost nonexistent. Recoil impulse is further reduced by a two-piece muzzle device which serves as both a flash cone and recoil compensator.

Clearly not designed for the fire and movement tactics of today's modern infantry, the WA 2000 will find a home on the target range and in the more static environments of certain law-enforcement special operations. Set up for either left- or right-handed shooters, the WA 2000 will be available by September of this year.

Jim and Charlie Leatherwood were there with their famous line of automatic ranging rifle scopes, the ART II and the MPC/ART (see "State-of-the-art Scope," SOF, May '82), as well as a new Leatherwood mount for the Kalashnikov. Shepherd Scope Ltd. exhibited an interesting 4X-9X variable range-finding scope with a dual reticle system.

Also noteworthy was the Finnish Valmet M78/83S sniper rifle, in 7.62mm NATO and 5.56mm NATO, imported by Odin International, Ltd.; Lanchester U.S.A.'s Sterling Mark 6 Carbine and the complete line of IMI's Galil assault rifles brought in by Magnum Research, Inc. Paragon Sales imports a caliber .177 pellet rifle manufactured by the People's Republic of China. A Type 56 look-alike, it's used for training purposes in the PRC.

Most of the above consume large quantities of 7.62mm NATO and 5.56mm NATO ammo. Most remanufactured ammunition fired through these weapons is produced on the well-known Dillon RL 1000 progressive reloader. Few of us can afford the RL 1000's $2,500 price tag. Cognizant of this, Dillon Precision Products, Inc. has recently introduced the Dillon RL 450, a true all-caliber, progressive reloader, using standard dies, for only $365.

Further information about any of the products mentioned above can be obtained by writing to the manufacturers and distributors listed below:

Expensive paper-punch: Walther WA 2000 makes tiny group in septum of heart-shaped target at 100m.

BERETTA U.S.A. CORP.
Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607

DILLON PRECISION PRODUCTS, INC., Dept. SOF, 7755 East Gelding Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85260

HECKLER & KOCH, INC.
Dept. SOF, Suite 218, 933 N. Kenmore St., Arlington, VA 22201

INTERARMS (Walther)
Dept. SOF, 10 Prince St., Alexandria, VA 22313

LANCHESTER, U.S.A., INC.
Dept. SOF, 3404 Irving Blvd., Dallas, TX 75247

LEATHERWOOD INDUSTRIES, INC., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1378, Stephensville, TX 76401

MAGNUM RESEARCH, INC.
Dept. SOF, 2825 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418

ODIN INTERNATIONAL, LTD.
Dept. SOF, 800 Slaters Lane, Alexandria, VA 22313

PARAGON SALES & SERVICES, INC., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2022, Joliet, IL 60434

SHEPHERD SCOPE LTD.
Dept. SOF, R.R. #1, P.O. Box 23, Waterloo, NE 68069

STEYR DAIMLER PUCH OF AMERICA CORP., Dept. SOF, 85 Metro Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094

SURVIVAL AIDS, LTD.
Dept. SOF, The Square, Morland, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 3AZ, U.K.

ABOVE: From sniper's rigs to machine pistols, the Leatherwoods had it. RIGHT: Just back from Afghanistan, Kokalis fantasizes about long-range varmint-shooting with Walther WA 2000. LOWER RIGHT: Dick Anguin and Larry Bricco hawk revolutionary, light, safe, inexpensive Bullettraps.

Almost too much: SOF military small-arms editor fondles long-barreled HK 94 carbine and new HK SL6 semiauto in midst of acres of guns.

America's Displaced Missile

MX PEACEKEEPER

by Dr. Jerry Pournelle

Photos courtesy of Department of Defense

THE United States currently faces the most serious threat to our national existence since the civil War. This threat comes from the Soviet Union's increasing strategic supremacy over the United States: By the end of the 1980s, the Soviets will be capable of delivering 10,000 to 25,000 nuclear warheads against the continental United States. Although long foreseen, the political authorities are just getting around to doing something about it.

The issues, while complex, aren't that hard to understand. The only reason it seems difficult is because of the technical terminology. The trouble is, there are so many unknowns that experts can legitimately disagree. When the experts can't agree, but the problem must be solved anyway, politicians get in the act. Some politicians don't bother to learn even the facts that the experts do agree on; being used to "soft sciences" like sociology that have no "right" answers, they assume strategic problems work that way too.

If our current leaders can't cope with these difficult problems, then it's time we got some leaders who can. There must be a few citizens left who're willing to put national survival ahead of politics. Maybe it's time we elected them to Congress, before the current batch kills off the lot of us.

Determining strategic stability isn't difficult. When defensive systems are stronger than offensive ones, the situation is stable. When the offense dominates, it isn't.

Example: If it takes 10 attacking missiles to reliably knock out one enemy "defensive" bird, no one is going to be anxious to start the war.

Why should they? If the attacking side launches everything, it disarms itself, leaving the other side with fire in its eye and 90 percent of its force intact.

On the other hand, if one attacking bird has a high probability of knocking off 10 of the other side's missiles, the situation can "escalate" rapidly, as president and chairman reason to themselves, "He may not want to attack, but he knows that if I

attack first I'll win, and he's not going to allow that." It's then only a question of time before someone reaches for the Gold Phone.

Unfortunately, a long time ago Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara adopted a national policy known as "Assured Destruction." This doctrine says that you'll never have to fight a war; you just make sure that if the other guy kills you, you can kill him back. This was later refined and called "Mutual Assured Destruction," more aptly known as MAD, which holds that *defensive* systems are *destabilizing*.

MAD logic is as follows: If war is made too destructive to fight, nobody will start a war. Therefore, anything that decreases war's destructive potential is a step toward war. This argument was once popular among sophisticated people on university campuses.

Under this doctrine, civil defense and fallout shelters were considered an act of aggression by the United States against the Soviet Union: By protecting our citizens, we'd be making it more likely for a war to break out with the Soviets. (Strange, but the fact that the Soviets did continue to upgrade their civil-defense system throughout the '60s and '70s was not considered an inflammatory act toward the United States.)

To conform to MAD logic, all the fallout shelters scheduled to be built under most interstate on-ramps across the country were scrapped, and after pouring all that concrete — 95 percent of the interstate highway system is now completed — we have fewer shelters than we did in the early '60s. The shelters would have been cheap if constructed as the highways were.

To this day a great many "defense intellectuals" either reject active defense, or never think about it.

Whatever one thinks of the MAD doctrine, however, one thing is clear: If our strategic offensive forces can't survive, we've nothing at all since we already gave up strategic defenses, including civil defense.

Now that the United States has determined that some strategic offensive system is needed, what system is most invulnerable? How can you tell what will happen if a nuclear war starts? After all, nobody ever fought one before.

First, you can't know for certain, and indeed one of the best ways to keep the missiles in their silos is to increase that uncertainty — generals and marshals *hate* to gamble without a reasonable estimate of what's likely to happen. However, you can make some calculations, and if you have enough kill capability, you can be fairly confident in your predictions.

The United States bases its intercontinental strategic offensive forces, the SOF, on three independent branches, which together we call the "Triad." Each leg of the Triad is supposed to be independent of the other two, meaning that whatever can kill one leg should not be able to destroy either of the other two. The Triad is composed of manned bombers, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Prior to the ICBM leg, we had Snark, an air-breathing pilotless aircraft capable of flying intercontinental distances — an early "cruise missile."

Each leg depends on a different mechanism for survival. The manned bomber is very vulnerable; it can be killed on the ground by nukes

landing a long way off. Its survival depends on early warning: Unlike the other two legs of the Triad, the manned bombers can be launched at an early alert stage and still be recalled.

Without warning, the manned bomber is a dead duck; but even if warned it still has to penetrate the enemy's air defenses, which may be pretty formidable. We try to circumvent their defenses with stand-off missiles, electronic countermeasures (ECM) and such equipment but none of these changes the fact that the B-52 was designed in the '40s and early '50s, with the first aircraft rolled out in 1956. (I worked on B-52 updates as my first aerospace job.) Although it's not strictly true that the planes are older than the pilots who fly them — at least not older than the senior pilots — they're pretty old. One USAF colonel recently described a B-52 as "a mass of parts flying in loose formation."

The Soviets have had more than 20 years to design defenses against the B-52, and while Soviet science and engineering in the civilian sector may be lacking, they devote tremendous resources to their military. I wouldn't care to bet my family's life on the ability of that grand old girl to penetrate deep into Soviet territory.

Even if the bombers can penetrate, they're not useful for *fighting* a nuclear war. You can't send the bombers to attack Soviet missile bases; there'd be nothing to hit but empty holes by the time a subsonic bomber got to the designated target.

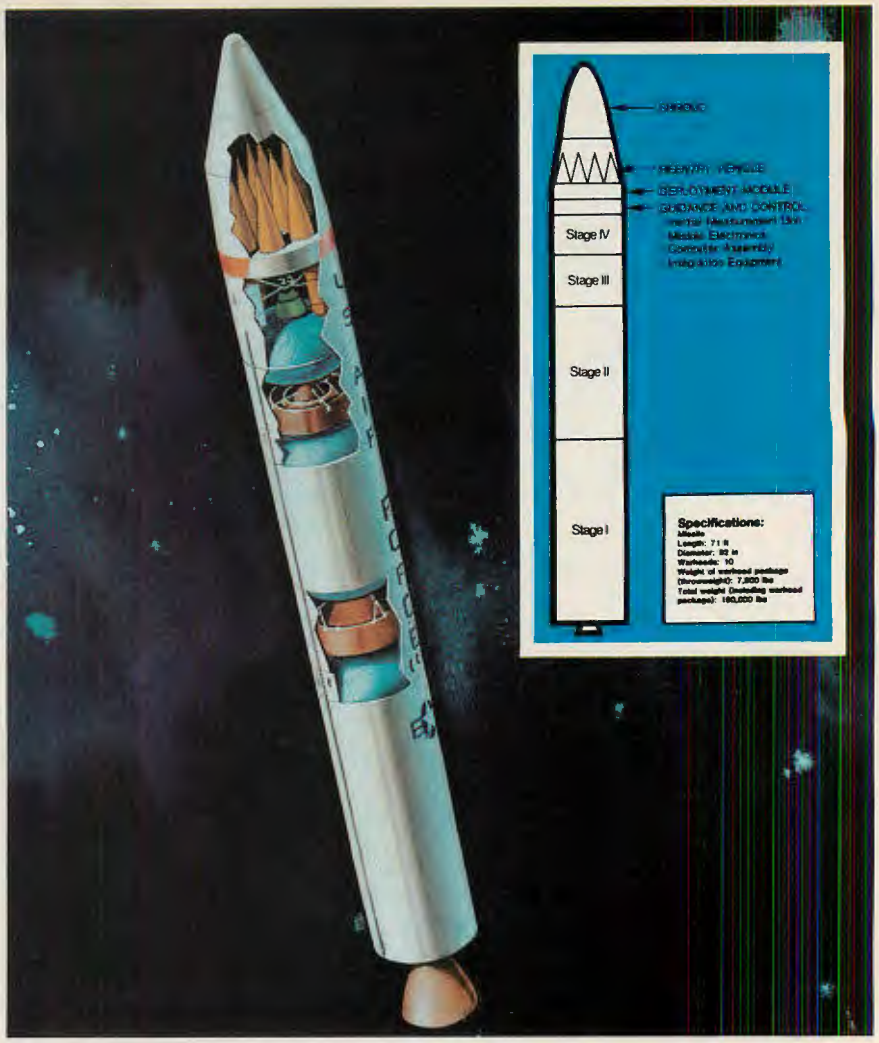
And that's what's wrong with cruise missiles: They take quite a while to reach their targets after they are launched. Moreover, they can't be recalled so they have to be survivable, not so easy for a pilotless aircraft. The cruise missile is a good supplement to the force, but not a leg of the Triad.

The second leg of the Triad, the submarine, depends for its survival entirely on concealment. If you can track a submarine to within a few miles, it can be killed by an ICBM carrying an H-bomb. Ocean bombardment won't be good for the fish, but the Soviets aren't much on environmentalism.

All the submarines that are in harbor — up to a third of them, sometimes more — are dead the day the war starts. You can be sure that nuclear-submarine bases are high on the enemy's target priority list. The rest of the submarines, though, can make it if they can hide.

Unfortunately, submarine concealment isn't what it used to be. Subs can be located in at least two ways. First, they can be tracked from their bases; every submariner can tell stories about playing tag with Russkis when they leave Holy Loch.

Worse, though, the oceans aren't nearly so opaque as we once thought.



Artist's conception of MX missile in flight. MX is programmed to carry 10 warheads and has throw weight of 7,900 pounds. MX system will be composed of 200 missiles and 4,600 shelters.

Not long ago, we examined some radar pictures made from a satellite. "Look at that," one of the engineers exclaimed. "You can see things down deep in the ocean." And sure enough, using "synthetic aperture" radars, the oceans have become somewhat transparent down to 50 meters.

Although subs can go deeper than that, they can't *launch* deeper down. Moreover, anything that accidentally — and the above incident was accidental, nobody expected it at all — makes the oceans transparent to 50 meters is unlikely to be limited to that. Now that the principle is known, you can expect satellite surveillance of the oceans to get much better.

MASTER MERC ON MX

Dr. Jerry Pournelle served in the artillery during the Korean War. After the war he studied engineering, operations research, mathematics and political science. He began his professional career in the Bomber Weapons Unit at the Boeing Company during the '50s. Later, he worked in research and design capacities for Aerospace and Rockwell aeronautical firms.

In 1964 he was the general editor of Project 75, a 10-year forecast of ballistic-missile technology, capability and strategy. In 1969, while managing director of the Pepperdine Research Institute, he co-authored *The Strategy of Technology* with Dr. Stefan T. Possony of the Hoover Institution. The book has been used as a text in both the Air Force Academy and the Air War College.

Dr. Pournelle has been a full-time author and consultant since 1970. His works include *The Mercenary, King David's Spaceship, West of Honor* and *A Step Farther Out*. With Larry Niven, he has written the bestselling novels, *Lucifer's Hammer, The Mote in God's Eye* and *Oath of Fealty*.

He is the editor of *There Will Be War* (TOR Books, 1983) and the popular *Janissaries* novels, of which the latest, *The Crown and Clan*, has just been released.

Incidentally, as I write this, a Soviet naval surveillance satellite just fell to earth in the Indian Ocean. It carried a 100-kilowatt nuclear power plant. The United States has yet to put a 10-kilowatt satellite into orbit.

So the subs are getting more vulnerable. They've also got another problem: They're not effective for *fighting* a nuclear war. Submarines have to launch their missiles from unpredictable places (imagine what the KGB would pay to find out where our subs would launch from), and this drastically limits their accuracy.

That leaves the third leg of the Triad, land-based missiles, which are currently the subject of heated controversy in Washington. Do we need land-based missiles at all? Maybe it would be better to put all our birds on subs or ships, so we don't invite the Soviets to bombard U.S. real estate.

We do need land-based missiles. If you don't have them, you have forfeited a great deal of your war-fighting capability. You're betting everything on the fact that the other side is rational, and that he sees things the way you do.

But does he? Suppose one morning the Soviets knock out our Minuteman installations (not too difficult, as we'll see in a bit) and many of our subs. They still have quite a few birds left. The Red Army is marching into Germany. The hot line chatters, and the message is shockingly simple: "You haven't really been hurt yet. Most of your cities are in good shape. Surrender, or we launch the rest of our force."

At that point, you need something capable of knocking out the rest of their strategic force. If I were a Soviet leader, I would certainly be willing to believe that the United States would shoot at my missile bases.

To have that capability, you need land-based missiles. To be exact, you need MX. Only MX has both the accuracy and the Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs, which are different from multiple warheads: MIRVs can attack targets much farther apart) that give some counterforce capability. True, it won't be a *lot* of counterforce capability; but it'll be all we'll have.

But can MX survive?

That depends on the basing concept. Before we get into different basing systems, we have to explain vulnerability.

If you attack a target with an ICBM, your "single-shot probability of kill" (PKSS) depends on three major factors: attacker's yield, hardness of target and attacker's accuracy.

Yield is the size, in kilotons or megatons, of the attacking warhead. Yield to weight ratios are pretty thoroughly classified, but nobody really doubts that you can pack 10 one-megaton warheads onto one big ICBM.

TAKING THE HIGH GROUND

by Donna DuVall

High Frontier is a privately funded defense plan that seeks to use space technology to solve the United States' strategic problems.

Conceived by Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, USA (Ret.), it represents a dramatic departure from the Mutual Assured Destruction logic that has dominated defense planning in the United States for the last 25 years.

Described by Graham as a "technological end-run on the Soviets," High Frontier is a four-layered, spaceborne, defense plan that makes maximum use of the technological supremacy we still have over the Soviet Union.

The first layer is a spaceborne defense to filter a Soviet missile attack in early flight. The second layer would be a broader space protection system, using advanced weaponry — including beam weapons — to further reduce attacking missile effectiveness, and to protect space assets such as satellites or stations. The third layer is a land-based point-defense system to intercept any missiles that might get through the first two layers, and protect our ground missile silos from a preemptive first strike. The fourth layer of High Frontier calls for an active and effective civil-defense program.

Essentially, High Frontier seeks to keep an attacker (presumably the Soviets) uncertain of success if it considers launching a nuclear attack against the United States. The uncertainties resulting from a complicated war plan are the essence of deterrence, according to Graham's plan.

In addition to providing a layered defense system that makes attack less likely, High Frontier also would provide protection for our current spaceborne defense installations, and incentive for further space exploration and development by the public and private sectors.

Supporters of the plan say that its most attractive advantage is that it's achievable with existing or easily developed technology. And all of its operational principles are sound — not hypothetical, as is the MX dense-pack fratricide principle.

More information can be obtained about High Frontier from the book, *High Frontier: A New National Strategy*, available from High Frontier, 1010 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 737-4979. The 175-page illustrated book costs $15.

Hardness is generally measured in "pounds per square inch overpressure" (PSI), which means the amount of pressure the target can withstand before it's made useless.

Accuracy depends on a lot of things, the most important being: weather at launch site; winds over target; gravitational anomalies under the flight path; quality of computers and mathematicians; and location errors (where are you when you launch, and where is the other guy in relation to you?). We measure accuracy in Circular Probable Error (CEP), which is the size of the circle that *half* your shots will fall inside.

Given those three factors — yield, hardness and accuracy — we can calculate the PKSS, and with that, we can determine the overall vulnerability of the force. While there are classified refinements, all the numbers you really need have long since been published in the U.S. Government Printing Office's "The Effects of Nuclear Weapons." They've even been put on a circular slide rule that RAND Corporation used to sell for a dollar in the '60s.

And now, at long last, we can get down to cases. The Minuteman Missile lies in a silo that's officially hardened to 300 PSI. When we put in Minuteman — the last one was installed in the '60s — it was believed that the Soviets could throw a megaton with a CEP of about a nautical mile. This gave them a PKSS of about .09, and it would take more than 20 warheads to give better than .9 kill probability. The situation was stable.

Increasing the yield of warheads doesn't help as much as you might think. Going to 10 megatons raised the PKSS to about 35 percent, but it still takes more than five attackers to get a 90-percent chance of killing one Minuteman; still there wasn't a lot to worry about.

Changes in accuracy, on the other hand, are very significant. Cutting the CEP in half (well, to 2,700 feet) gives a one-megaton warhead the same kill probability that 10 had at a mile. Cutting CEP to 1,000 feet is more drastic yet: Now the PKSS of one megaton is above 90 percent.

At an accuracy of 600 feet CEP, a 500-kiloton weapon has above 99-percent kill probability. Now all you need is multiple warheads, and you can knock out more birds than you launch. Clearly the situation is unstable.

In 1964, we figured the Soviets had 6,000-foot CEP, and predicted that by 1975 they would have 600 feet. By 1975, I'd given up my security clearances, so I don't know what they had actually achieved. It doesn't take clearances to see what must be happening to the error budget, however.

For example, weather satellites make winds over target predictable so you can correct for them by studying the many

polar-orbiting satellites; you can map gravitational anomalies; observation satellites have reduced location errors to an insignificant level; the Soviets have acquired up-to-the-minute gyros, precision lathes and state-of-the-art computers for the well-trained mathematicians they already had.

The Soviets aren't 10 feet tall, but if by 1984 they don't have several warheads per bird, each with at least 600-foot CEP, they're pygmies.

Now, what can we do about it?

One: It does little good to put MX in Minuteman silos despite the fact that the MX is a better bird. The problem is, you decrease stability by deploying a force that makes them nervous as hell, but which they can knock out.

Two: In the '60s we studied numerous mobile basing schemes: road-mobile, rail-mobile, off-road-mobile, canal- and barge-mobile, ship-mobile, etc. We even looked at artificial ponds, and things that crawled around on the bottom of Lake Michigan. There were a lot of people in favor of mobile systems — then. Now, though, satellites make it damned hard to hide something 70 feet long and weighing 190,000 pounds. (Actually, with the launcher, it's nearer 200 feet and 500,000 pounds.)

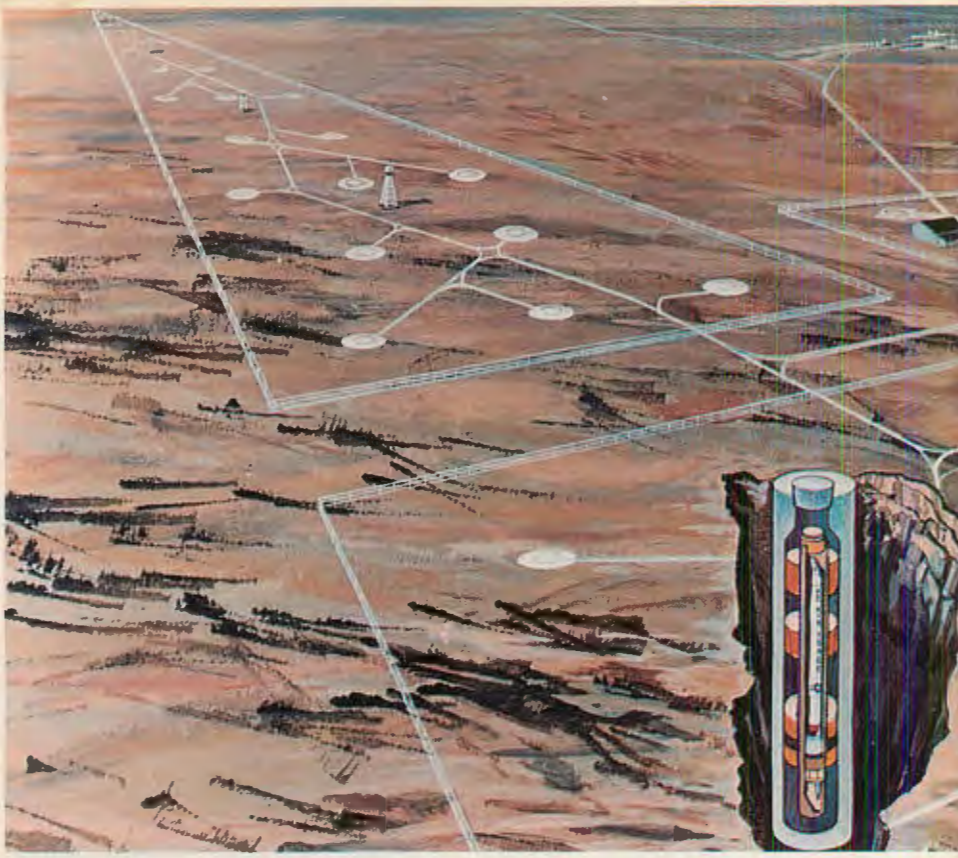
You could make a smaller mobile missile. Unfortunately, we don't have one now, and it will take both time and money to develop one.

Worse, you can't harden a mobile system much. Even a "small" ICBM rocket is a big object. Twenty PSI hardening would probably be more than we could achieve. The kill radius of a 50-megaton weapon against a 20-PSI target is very large, and area bombardment becomes attractive to the attacker. You've invited the enemy to use live grenades while you barricade yourself in a room with your family. Your survival chances aren't good.

A waterborne basing system would not be *Triad independent*, and doesn't have the war-fighting capability we'd like. The scheme for basing MX on five-man subs in shallow water will lose its support when the full realization of synthetic aperture radar sinks in. Putting the missiles on merchant ships, or surface ships of any kind, doesn't help much, either. And nearly every mobile basing scheme puts nukes out where they have to be protected from terrorists, saboteurs and well-meaning U.S. citizens aroused in protest (and you know there'll be plenty of them).

Air-mobile and air-launched systems were long-term favorites, and I was much for them in the '60s. The Pentagon's most recent analysis says we just can't afford them: They would cost approximately $150 billion, possibly more.

The "race-track" or "shell-game" basing system has been rejected on political, economic and security



ABOVE: Proposed dense-pack basing scheme would place 100 MX missiles in 15-square-mile area. Survivability of scheme is based on fratricide principle. Dense pack was rejected by Congress in late '82.

ABOVE: Author's first aerospace job was updating B-52s at Boeing in early '50s. Boeing B-52 Stratofortress is intercontinental, high-altitude nuclear bomber that was designed in '40s and '50s and entered U.S. Air Force flying arsenal in 1955.

ABOVE: Artist's sketch of Trident Strategic Missile Submarine (SSBN). Trident is improved, nuclear-powered, long-range-missile naval leg of U.S. strategic Triad.

BELOW: Rockwell International's B-1 bomber was designed to replace aging B-52. The most expensive combat aircraft in history, B-1 has been very controversial, resulting in Congress halting its production.

grounds. Synthetic aperture radars have seen old watercourses under the Sahara Desert beneath many feet of sand; they can look through a lot of stuff we thought was opaque. There's also the KGB: Want to bet our lives they can't find out which bunker has the bird?

In fact, every alternative you've ever heard of, and a few you haven't, were analyzed in great detail back in 1964. I know, because I was editor of the final report. I even invented one scheme myself, Citadel, which would put some birds as well as a national command post under a granite mountain. It had a serious problem: The birds would survive all right, but if the enemy attacked the doors, how would the birds get *out* after the attack?

Every one of these basing schemes has its drawbacks.

However, though there isn't any foolproof basing system, you *can* make the other guy complicate his war plan. The simpler the war plan, the more likely the war; thus you don't lightly give up any leg of the Triad, especially not now when we're just realizing new vulnerabilities in the wet leg.

First try the obvious: Harden your birds. In 1964 we called it "Superhard," 5,000 PSI basing. Now 5,000 PSI isn't easy to achieve. There are severe engineering problems, and it isn't cheap. Worse, "Superhard" didn't buy all that much: At 500-foot CEPs, a one-megaton has a 95-percent chance of killing "superhard" targets. (A one-megaton weapon makes a crater 250 feet deep and over 1,000 feet in diameter — even in hard rock.) Thus, putting MX in 5,000-PSI silos separated by miles didn't seem worth the cost.

The "dense pack" scheme came after my time. It makes a lot of sense. We used to worry about "fratricide" among our MIRVs, meaning that one goes off and kills a bunch of its brothers before they can get to their target. After all, a re-entering warhead in flight is a lot softer than a missile in a silo, and thus will be killed at much greater distances.

If fratricide is a problem for us, it'll be a problem for them. If it's a problem for them, why not increase that problem by spacing the MX emplacement just far enough apart that a hit on one — or half way between two of them — destroys only one (or none) of our missiles?

There's no magic in this, but it *does* complicate hell out of the enemy's war plan. He not only has to coordinate strikes against air bases, submarines and missiles (including good old Minuteman), but his attack on the MX Peacekeeper base has to be timed *exactly* down to fractions of a millisecond — or else he has to attack our Peacekeeper force one missile at a time.

Any artilleryman knows the problems involved in getting off a precise TOT (Time On Target: All the shells go off over the target at once) for a single battery. Imagine trying it at intercontinental distances. True, the time of detonation can be coordinated. We can build clocks a lot more accurate than the ones needed for that. (I'm not so sure that given the exact time sequence, there aren't enough timing uncertainties in the *chemical* explosive elements of a nuclear weapon to cause some concern, but we can ignore that one.)

The real problem comes with having a hundred or more birds arrive in position all at the same instant. ICBMs travel thousands of feet per second, and we're talking about CEPs in the hundreds of feet. Since the ICBMs all have to *detonate* at once, it doesn't take much error in launch time to put a lot of them miles away from their intended targets when they explode.

If the enemy chooses some other means to defeat dense pack — earth penetrators, for example — he has to build and develop the missiles, which will take time, and he probably has to test them, and we'll get some inkling of the tests. There are other clever ways to attack dense pack; but fortunately every one of them is complex enough to be a planner's nightmare.

Meanwhile, what have we lost? If the enemy's accuracy is nowhere near as good as we thought, and the fratricide argument turns out to be fallacious, then we'll lose more missiles than we would if we spaced them out. On the other hand, because of his inaccuracy and our superhardening, we'll have well over half those accurate 10-warhead Peacekeepers left after his best attack.

If we decide on active defenses — Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham's Project *High* Frontier, as an example — it's a lot easier to defend the corridors to one patch of ground than a lot of installations scattered over a wide area.

The plain fact is that dispersal is usually a good idea, but it isn't always; sometimes you're better off hardening hell out of your fortress and concentrating inside it. (I'm aware of the Maginot Line mentality; I'm also aware of just how valuable, in a different era, fortresses and magazines were.) Just about every honest analyst who takes the trouble to work through the numbers comes away muttering, "That's a goofy sounding scheme, but damned if it doesn't look like it might work...."

There is another possibility: Put MX in the old Minuteman silos, but defend them. This is what Project High Frontier recommends that we do.

Gen. Graham rejects the idea of trying to match the Soviets in tanks, guns, ships, men, planes and missiles. Instead, he says, let's take a strategic sidestep into space. Use the space environment and our lead in high technology to construct missile defenses. They won't be perfect, but they won't need to be: The enemy can't know how good our defenses are. Thus he can't be sure of the outcome of his strike. A lot of competent people are convinced Graham's plan is best.

The U.S. strategic problem is damned severe. The only certainty is that you can't remove all the uncertainties. Whatever we adopt will have flaws and will be controversial; but anyone looking honestly at the problem will conclude that we have to do something, and it's getting late.

The stream of technology moves on; we can move with it, or try to swim against it. But we can't stand still.

I can't say dense pack will give us our best defense. I don't believe it will; I prefer Gen. Graham's "bold-stroke" approach. However, I can appreciate the risks involved in adopting this space-based system, and see why the president might not want to take them.

Of the "conventional" things we could do, dense pack makes the most sense, and is most compatible with a shift to strategic defense, a step we must take ultimately. Nothing else leads to a strategy of "Assured Survival" rather than Assured Destruction.

I believe our best course is to have both the MX and Graham's High Frontier defense systems. By the time we have MX in production, we'll know whether we need dense pack (at its high cost: 5,000-PSI silos are not cheap) or can rely on space defense. Meanwhile, we've bought our children some reasonable insurance for a secure future.

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STERLING

Continued from page 45

clandestine operations. The rear flip-sight offers a choice of two apertures, both calibrated for 100 meters. One aperture is conventional, the other multi-holed to increase its light-gathering potential under conditions of poor visibility.

I advise the use of modern non-corrosive, jacketed ammunition in this weapon. Normal maintenance procedures can then be followed until approximately 5,000 rounds have been fired. At that time, advanced cleaning is required by qualified personnel using the Mark 5 armorer's kit. The suppressor must be completely disassembled, all the internal parts boiled in water, cleaned with a stiff brush and the two surfaces of the gun body on which the suppressor casing locates lubricated with a film of powdered graphite. Oil should be used nowhere on the suppressor (heat will cause it to varnish), except very lightly on the barrel's bore.

The L34A1 should normally be fired in the semiautomatic mode only. The full-auto option is supposedly present for emergency use only. But, what the hell does that mean? Ask the man in the field when a fire fight is not an emergency.

Low-powered ammo will not function properly in the L34A1 because of its lighter bolt and simplified spring assembly. U.S. factory ammunition and the Finnish Lapua reloads from the 1960s resulted in short cycling with consequent doubling in the semiauto mode and numerous failures to feed. Stick to the hotter Israeli and European 9mm ball.

Hit probability is high with excellent accuracy out to maximum appropriate ranges. This is a function of the longer sight radius (20.5 inches), greater weight, reduced recoil energy and absence of muzzle blast.

Using the most elaborate and efficiently designed sound suppression system in the world, the L34A1 is the quietest submachine gun in town, bar none.

The earliest version of the semiautomatic Mark 6 was called the Sterling Police Carbine. It has been around since the late 1950s when it was sold in substantial quantities to British colonists in Kenya during the Mau Mau uprising and in Malaysia during the communist insurrection.

Not being plagued with the more insane provisions of our National Firearms Act of 1934 (which, by the way, was foisted on us by the National Rifle Association in substitution for a handgun registration act Congress was about to pass), this version and the one still sold throughout the world, has the same 7.8-inch barrel assembly as the L2A3 submachine gun. It was distinguished from the L2A3 by the substitution of a trigger mechanism which restricted the gun to semiautomatic fire. But an L2A3 trigger pack could be readily exchanged and, in addition, one of the trigger pack pins could be removed from the Mark

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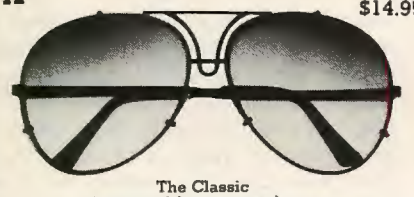

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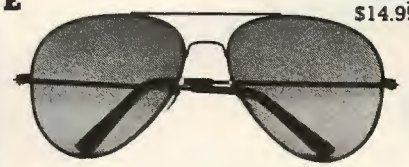

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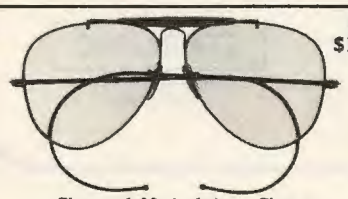

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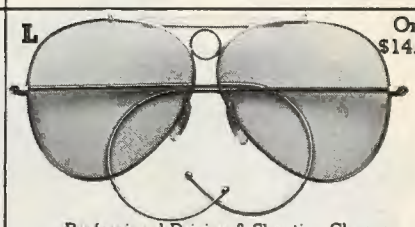

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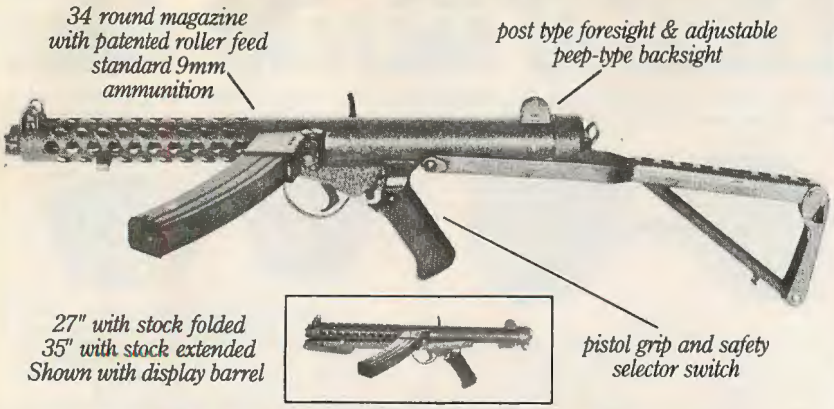
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6 trigger group and the gun, which fired from the open bolt, would go full-auto. The plastic pistol grip on the early Mark 6s was built up so the selector could supposedly not move forward. The trigger pack assembly now supplied with all Mark 6 Carbines has been welded together so that it cannot be taken apart.

To meet BATF regulations the Mark 6 barrel is 16.1 inches long. It is attached to the receiver by a threaded front barrel nut. It has no mounting bar and an L2A3 barrel cannot be attached to the Mark 6. Installation and disassembly of the Mark 6 barrel requires removal of the ejector, which takes less than a minute. The Mark 6 receiver has a bushing at the chamber end, again to prevent installation of an L2A3 barrel. The Mark 6 barrel has been turned to a smaller diameter to permit passage through this bushing. The Mark 6 Carbine fires from the closed-bolt position and has a spring-loaded floating firing pin. The Mark 6 bolt incorporates an excellent firing pin safety — in essence a disconnector — to prevent ignition when the bolt is out of battery. A spring detent drives this safety in front of the firing pin extension when the bolt is retracted. The four helical cutting ribs remain and the bolt's diameter is the same.

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CHARLIE'S LUCK

Continued from page 27

membered the fifth of Beam's Choice inside. Holzer looked at me.

"Yeah." I shook my head. "What we really need is a drink."

"Go get it," he grinned.

I stood up, but before I could step toward the cooler, a blinding flash turned the night into day. I was hurled back across the bunker and bounced off the rear wall. Regaining my senses, I reached for the PRC-25 radio.

"Chrome Trails, this is 58. What happened? Over!"

"We just took a direct hit to the commo bunker," the captain screamed.

"That's strange," I replied. "We just took one out here."

Bomb! That was my first thought. But — NO! Charlie doesn't have any airplanes. Yet, the only time I'd ever felt anything like that was once when I had accidently experienced an Arc Light from within the same grid square in which it fell.

"Come on, Bob," I told Holzer. "We'd better get over to the TOC and see what we can do."

We sprinted across camp and damn near fell down the steps into the bunker that held the radio room and the Tactical Operations Center. We didn't want to be caught in the open if any more —

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of whatever it was — came in.

As my eyes adjusted to the dim light of the radio room, I saw the team leader holding the mike to our KWM2-A Collins single-sideband radio set. His eyes were terror striken; he was incoherent.

"Sir," I suggested, relieving him of the microphone, "let me do that. You're needed outside."

The intel sergeant was trying to round up the strikers and assess the situation. The captain gratefully followed Holzer out of the bunker.

"Chrome Trails! This is zero-three. Over," the radio barked.

"This is Chrome Trails. Over."

"Am I talking to 58 Kilo Romeo? Over." Capt. Gossett, our ex-team leader, was now S-3 for the B-Team. He recognized my voice.

"Roger. This is 58 Kilo Romeo. Over."

"Good to hear you. I've been getting some confusing reports, so I hope you can tell me what's going on out there."

I gave him a quick rundown on the current situation.

"Where is your 09 and 50?" he asked.

"On patrol. Location YB — I shackle — UIB TWR. Over," I told him, encrypting the grid coordinates of the patrol.

"Roger. UIB TWR. Standing by. Out."

I turned to the assistant radio operator, a young SP4 who had been on site less than a week and who stood transfixed throughout the whole exchange.

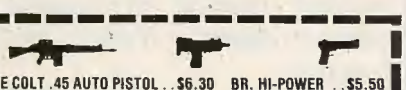
"Take over," I told him. "I'm going outside and see what I can do."

As I emerged from the bunker, the trio of Holzer, the team leader and the intel sergeant approached. The intel sergeant, the only black on the team and as a sergeant first class, the ranking enlisted man in camp, had taken charge.

"Sir," he addressed the captain, who was still a little shaken, "you'd better go below and send a SitRep to the B-Team."

"Right." He nodded and disappeared into the TOC.

"Looks like everything's under con-



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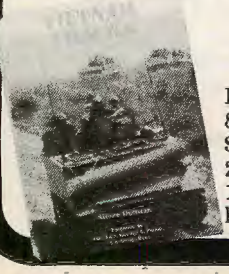

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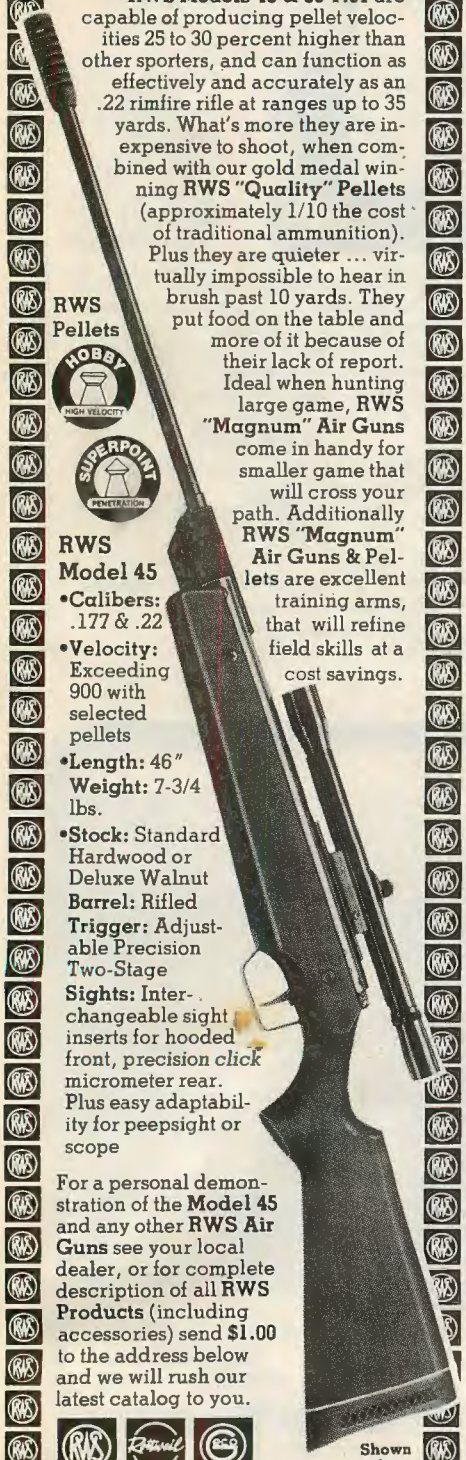

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trol," grinned the intel sergeant, his face glistening with sweat. "I want you and Holzer to take the first shift on guard tonight. I want two Americans awake at all times."

Holzer and I moved out toward the pile of kindling that used to be our hooch, picking our way through the litter of cast-iron shrapnel and shell casings. "Did you ever locate the point of impact?" I asked.

"Hell, no! I can't even tell where to start looking. Look over there." Holzer indicated the twisted remains of the wooden buildings that had once been the camp. "There's no rhyme nor reason. No direction of blast. Things are just a twisted mess of rubble. Looks like a tornado hit this place."

I agreed. The tin was ripped off roofs and boards were splintered. An explosion strong enough to cause that much damage would leave a crater as large as a swimming pool.

"I wonder if the division might have stored a Davy Crockett over there?"

"Damn. I sure hope not," Bob grunted. "We're already in trouble if they did. The radiation has already had plenty of time to give us a good dose."

We spent the remaining four hours of darkness wandering through the devastated camp, reassuring the strikers that everything was okay. After a while, we even began to believe ourselves.

About the time the first rays of the dawn broke over the mountains that protected our camp to the east, the intel sergeant emerged from his bunker.

"Good news, Nat," Holzer laughed. "The kitchen is still in pretty good shape." A lot of dust and dirt covered the stove and refrigerators, but nothing was broken. The Vietnamese house-boys were already sweeping up the area. Breakfast was right on time.

The team was just sitting down to eat when a light colonel and his entourage from the 5th Log came in. We invited him to sit down and join us.

"Your camp's gonna take a lot of work to rebuild," he mused over a scalding cup of coffee. He was getting ready to tell us something. We waited.

"No question about it," the captain agreed, now back in command. "But at least nobody got hurt."

"Oh? Then everyone must have been underground when the C-4 went off."

We bombarded him with questions. It turned out that the combat engineers had had 14,000 pounds of C-4 stored in a locked CONEX container. When the fires and explosions heated the steel container to ignition temperature, seven tons of C-4 blew up in our back door.

If we'd known, one of us would have gone in and opened the doors of the CONEX. Then the plastic explosive would have burned harmlessly instead of exploding.

The 5th Log wasn't real popular around A-244 for a while.

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TOP GUN

Continued from page 41

Before the steam of that shot is swept away in the wind, the next plane is taxiing into position. It is an endlessly fascinating process, unequaled in violence and precision in a small space. Just how small a space isn't widely realized. On *Forrestal*-class ships, there is only 136 feet from the end of the ramp to the first arresting wire. The four wires are 40 feet apart, allowing a landing pilot a mere 160 feet in which to trap.

We spent most of the first day on the LSO platform, portside aft, as the initial car-quals proceeded. The air wing generally has two LSOs, and each squadron aboard ship has one of its own. Previously, in the prop days, LSOs were checked out in all aircraft types aboard the carrier. That is rare today — flight time is harder to get — and consequently most LSOs are current in two or perhaps three planes. But, from experience, they know how each type should look in the pattern for a safe landing.

First aboard were the Tomcats. With their wings extended, the big Grummans dropped toward the deck at about 130 knots, noses cocked up and stabilizers working as the pilots "fished" for the right combination of attitude and airspeed. When they hit the deck, at a sink rate of about 20 feet per second, the entire airframe is wrenched by dynamic forces up to six times greater than it would experience landing on a runway.

Frequently the tailhooks scrape the deck before snagging a wire, striking sparks. And since planes land at full throttle in case of a go-round, all manner of small debris whips through the air with cyclonic force. If it weren't for the shield behind the LSO platform, the signal officer would be pelted with minute particles from the deck, which sting and occasionally injure unprotected personnel.

So went the cycle all afternoon as planes landed, taxied forward, and were flung off again. Each time the LSO's talker advised him of the deck status, shouting to make himself heard over the jet noise. "Gear set, Tomcat. Foul deck!" At this point another F-14 might be turning on its final approach while the previous plane was still taxiing clear of the wires. The spacing was equally close all day, sometimes averaging 35 seconds between landings. Inevitably the call became, "Gear set, Tomcat. Clear deck!"

And half a minute later another plane crunched down.

There were a few waveoffs, but I don't recall any caused by a poor approach. Several times when aircraft weren't fully clear of the angled deck,

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the senior LSO pushed the button on his wand which lit up the red lights on the display further up the deck. Pilots try to keep the "meatball" centered on the display for proper glide-slope while landing, but the flashing red lights that indicate a wave-off make a go-round mandatory.

Today, thanks to improved technology, sometimes only 23 knots of wind is needed over the deck to conduct landing operations. Although the difference between 30 knots and 22 or 23 may sound small, to a naval aviator it is significant. It's easier on both ships and planes.

After the Tomcats and Hawkeyes came the Corsair IIs. Attack Squadron 25's LSO turned around, grinning widely, and said, "Now watch a gentleman's airplane." It seems the A-7 inspires the same devotion as its ancestor, the F4U for which it is named. Destined for replacement by the controversial F/A-18 Hornet, which doubles as a fighter, the Corsair II still enjoys a good reputation. It has won the NATO bombing competition, and the attack-aviation community is not wholly satisfied with the prospects of switching to another mount. Designed by Northrop, built by McDonnell-Douglas, the Hornet is well along toward fleet deployment but even some supporters admit its cost versus capability is marginal.

Eventually the talker cried, "Gear set, Viking. Clear deck!" The chunky S-3s were entering the pattern. In some ways they are the most distinctive of all carrier aircraft. Their engines emit a hollow sound in staccato spurts as pilots jockey the throttles on landing. The noise, attributed to the Lockheed's compressor section in the engines, has been compared to the cry of a cougar.

The Viking is little known outside Naval Aviation, but it possesses considerable stretch. No longer in production, it could be built again on short notice as either an ASW or a tanker aircraft. It could perform an important strike role if plans continue to arm the S-3 with Harpoon cruise missiles.

Ranger and Air Wing Two returned in 1981 from the Indian Ocean, one of the globe's potential naval warfare arenas. The "Top Gun" team began another round of training, workup and deployment which compose the life cycle of carrier aviation. While on the line in any of the world's oceans, an aircraft carrier becomes the number one target for any adversary. As war correspondent Ernie Pyle observed nearly 40 years ago, it's a tenuous honor, but a proud one.

FREE AFGHANISTAN

THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER: A BRIEF HISTORY

by Barrett Tillman

Since early in the Second World War, the aircraft carrier has been recognized as the capital ship of the 20th century. For some, it is hard to realize that 40 years have passed since the flattop replaced the battleship in the naval pecking order.

Pearl Harbor is inevitably cited as the dramatic example of the carrier's abrupt rise to prominence, but the signs were there earlier for anyone who looked hard enough. In November 1940, a dozen Royal Navy carrier planes altered the balance of power in the Mediterranean by sinking or crippling three Italian battleships at anchor in Taranto Harbor. The nocturnal attack was successful out of all proportion to the assets employed or the cost — one plane and crew. Then in May 1941, Swordfish biplanes from HMS *Ark Royal* torpedoed the German battleship *Bismarck* in the North Atlantic, slowing her enough so that surface units could overtake and destroy her.

Ultimately, carriers fought their own kind. The first two flattop duels occurred in May and June of 1942 when, in the Coral Sea and the climactic Battle of Midway, outnumbered American carriers blunted Japanese drives at Australia and the Hawaiian Islands themselves. War at sea would never be the same.

Two more carrier clashes occurred during the Guadalcanal campaign that same year, contributing to the tenuous American grasp on that hard-contested island. At year-end, these four naval air battles had seen the destruction of three American and six Japanese carriers. The naval balance in the Pacific had shifted in the 12 months since Pearl Harbor, and American production now became decisive.

By autumn of 1943, the Central Pacific offensive was underway. Spearheading this drive which led to Tokyo Bay were the fast carriers, an entirely new generation of ships stocked with superb new aircraft. The big *Essex*-class ships, displacing 27,000 tons, teamed with the 11,000-ton *Independence*-class light carriers to lead the way in every amphibious operation of the Pacific War in the final 24 months of hostilities. From the Gilberts to the Marianas to the Philippines and finally to Okinawa and Japan itself, carrier-based Hellcats, Avengers and Helldivers won air superiority, sank the majority of the Imperial Navy and provided tactical air support to invasion troops. The "baby flattops," converted merchant hulls made over into "jeep carriers," did double duty as anti-submarine vessels in the Atlantic and Pacific, and specialized in bombing and strafing

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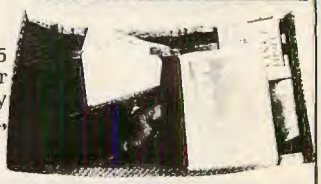

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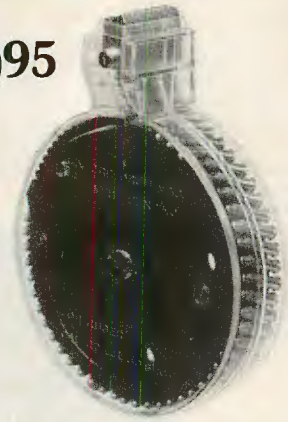

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Following WWII, the inevitable demobilization resulted in sharp cutbacks in naval strength. But even so, the remaining CVs (large carriers) and CVLs (light carriers) provided invaluable service during the Korean War. When the United Nations forces were nearly pushed out of the Asian peninsula, American and British flattops were the quickest source of tactical airpower, as they were closer than the Fifth Air Force units in Japan. Consequently, they could remain longer on target. The carrier's prime assets of mobility and territorial independence were never better illustrated. And again during Vietnam, Seventh Fleet carriers made their presence felt, with nearly half the total sorties flown over the North.

Today, the U.S. Navy remains by far the strongest carrier force on the planet. With 14 CVs on hand, at least one is available on station when needed in the world's troubled oceans. In addition, helicopter-carrying assault ships such as USS *Tripoli* and *Okinawa* afford a balanced force for what Winston Churchill liked to call "triphibious operations."

But lest we become too provincial, it is well to note that five other nations employ fixed-wing aircraft carriers. France is the number-two carrier navy, with a pair of post-World War II types operating fighter, strike and anti-submarine (ASW) aircraft.

The other CV "powers" boast one ship each; usually with a limited mix of ASW and light strike aircraft, all of U.S. or British origin. How long any of them will remain operational is problematical. Australia and Argentina each has a small carrier equipped with McDonnell-Douglas A-4 Skyhawk bombers and Grumman S-2 Tracker prop-driven ASW planes. Brazil's lone carrier is dedicated to anti-sub work, with S-2s and helos, while India maintains a mixed strike-ASW capability with *Vikrant*. A few other navies, including Spain's, operate helicopter carriers.

Conspicuous by its absence from this accounting is the British Navy. Since Britain's labor governments of the 1970s scrapped its strike carriers, the Royal Navy's historic role in this esoteric martial art has dwindled in the conventional sense. But the headlines accorded HMS *Hermes* and *Invincible* during the Falklands conflict of 1982 brought Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing aircraft (V/STOL) to public attention in much the same manner as the singer who remarked it took him 20 years to be discovered overnight. V/STOL is almost exclusively of British origin, dating to the Harrier's ancestor, the Hawker-Siddeley P.1127 of 1960.

However, state of the art is still growing in V/STOL. The tactical limitations are considerable: poor range and endurance, with limited ordnance. The U.S. Marine Corps is flying the AV-8A Harrier and has purchased B models, but they're intended for land-based close air support, not war at sea. The British Sea Harriers, augmented by Royal Air Force Harriers, performed magnificently in the Falklands, giving a major boost to the V/STOL concept.

But Argentina's potentially superior strike capability with *Vienticinco de Mayo* was nullified by the British submarine threat, so no direct carrier conflict resulted. It would have been the first such clash since 1944.

Despite the Harrier's success in the South Atlantic, more research and development is necessary to bring V/STOL to the point where it can compete with conventional CV-based strike aircraft in range and payload. And if any new developments are forthcoming, they will probably be found in the Soviet Union.

Curiously, the Russians had a commanding position in naval aviation early in the century. Like the British, the Czarist navy made good use of seaplane carriers during WWI, and it is of some interest to naval pundits to speculate where Russia might be today without the disrupting influence of the Bolshevik Revolution. Considering the home-grown aviation talent of men such as Alexander Severski and Igor Sikorski, the Russians were probably as capable as the British of evolving a true aircraft carrier by the late '20s.

Until recently, the fellow-traveling navies have adopted a polemical attitude toward carriers. The CV, they say, is an instrument of imperialism; hence they shun its use. Such pronouncements are plainly for public consumption. They may do for the communist Chinese, who haven't a snowball's chance in hell of developing their own carriers, but the Soviets have presumably dropped the pretense. Their *Kiev*-class carriers operate Yak-36 Forger VTOLs, plus ASW helos. They may have a long way to go in the fixed-wing department, but there's little doubt of their interest.

The Soviets are known to be building a ship of about 60,000-ton displacement, probably nuclear-powered, with modified versions of existing aircraft. Since the Russians seldom build warships in classes fewer than four units, it will be of considerable interest to see how far they go in the next decade to challenge American seapower.

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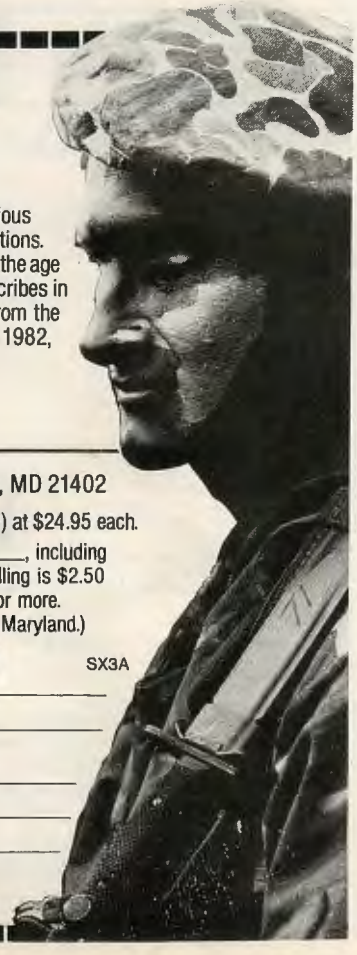

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MiG KILL

Continued from page 33

The MiG pilot aggressively followed him, failing to break off as expected. This guy was bad.

Back and forth over the Indochina sky the two adversaries battled, locked in a supersonic death struggle, neither gaining an advantage. Cunningham knew instantly that the communist was no ordinary pilot, but a skilled combat technician who anticipated his every move. Cunningham would have to summon all his resources to get the guy.

Scissoring canopy to canopy, the jet drivers eye-balled each other through the plexiglass and maneuvered their war machines, looking for the slightest edge. Neither pilot relented: up over the top, roll out, into each other, through the vertical, into the scissors, roll out inverted and at it again.

Both pilots slashed aggressively into each other with one thought in mind: Get the other guy to overshoot. Each time they pulled into a rolling maneuver, they executed a series of turn reversals around the other's vertical axis, each attempting to force the other into the 12 o'clock position.

The trick to the vertical rolling scissors is timing. If Cunningham timed the reversal properly, the MiG pilot would be unable to get back inside the F-4's turn radius. The American could then roll to the inside of the MiG, forcing it to overshoot again.

Then Cunningham could continue his roll-out to the enemy's rear quadrant, putting him into the classic six-o'clock firing position. But each time, the North Vietnamese counter-rolled and pulled his fighter's nose into the F-4 at just the right moment to stay to the outside of Cunningham's flight path.

As the scissors progressed from one reversal to the next, both aircraft quickly bled off energy and broke off the attack before achieving firing position. Coming to the end of the scissors, Cunningham found his faster, heavier machine edging ahead of the agile MiG, placing him in a vulnerable position.

Although a fighter pilot may be able to perform aerial combat maneuvers, if he can't perform them instinctively, or doesn't have a large number of options at his fingertips to do them with, his survival chances are limited. Also, it is critical that a pilot understand the performance capabilities of the enemy's aircraft as well as those of his own. Maneuver decisions — when and how much — are based on turn and speed characteristics, pull of gravity, weaponry and other factors that vary from aircraft to aircraft. Only experience against enemy aircraft will provide the reflexive judgment that separates MiG killers from the empty-handed.

Suddenly, at the top of a vertical scissors, the MiG driver broke off and dove for home, halting because he was either low on fuel, or unwilling to press his luck further with the U.S. pilot. Cunningham, momentarily astonished by the unexpected disengagement, recovered and — pouring the coal to the Phantom — followed the MiG down.

Now in afterburner, Cunningham kicked his ship around, reefed throught the MiG's six o'clock position, and fired his third Sidewinder. The nine-foot AIM-9 missile jumped from the wing rail, white rooster tail clearly visible, and roared after the North Vietnamese. After a quick splash of fire and a rush of smoke, the MiG pitched over and drove straight into the ground. The explosion and fireball were observed by Showtime 106 and 110. MiG number three.

Once more, Cunningham and Driscoll in Showtime 100 tried to leave North Vietnam but were bounced by another MiG-17. They broke into the MiG and were preparing for their fourth kill of the morning when Showtime 106 called that four more MiGs were attacking 100's six o'clock. Cunningham, deciding that the odds weren't right, disengaged and accelerated for the Gulf of Tonkin and the USS *Constellation*.

While 100 was climbing to 16,000 feet, a SAM missile detonated about 400 feet off its starboard wing. The two Navy officers continued their race homeward to the waiting *Connie*.

Just before reaching the coast, the F-4 began to yaw badly. The gauges showed that the aircraft was rapidly losing its hydraulic systems. Cunningham skillfully nursed the stricken Phantom over the Gulf by rudder-rolling as it gradually descended. Finally, giving all the extra distance it could, the F-4 started a long, slow, spinning descent into the sea. The crew gave it a few turns and then punched out together. They both got good chutes and landed uninjured in the Tonkin Gulf five nautical miles off the mouth of the Red River.

Within minutes, Cunningham and his RIO were picked out of the warm waters by a rescue helicopter from the USS *Okinawa*. After they were returned to the *Constellation*, the following secret message was flashed to CINCPAC and COMSEVENTH FLT:

"Z.4 On this date [10 May 1972] *Constellation*/airwing nine fighter crews destroyed five MiG-17 A/C and one MiG-21 confirmed and one probable as the result of airborne engagements.

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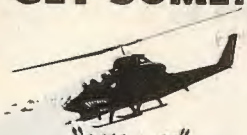

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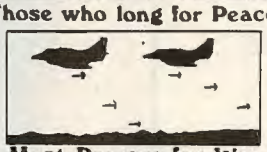
T8



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ANGOLA

Continued from page 53

To be continued: In July's SOF, Venable talks with UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi.

ANGOLAN UPDATE

When the Portuguese withdrew from Angola in 1975 after 400 years of rule, there were three guerrilla movements vying for control: The National Front for Liberation of Angola (FNLA), a pro-Western northern Angolan group composed primarily of the Bakongo tribe and headed by Holden Roberto; the Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola (MPLA), an urban movement led by Marxist intellectual Agostinho Neto and sponsored by the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba; and the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA), a nationalist movement mainly representing the Ovimbundu tribe, who comprise 40 percent of Angola's population.

UNITA's primary support comes from Communist China, although it also received support from the United States (as did FNLA) until the Clark Amendment stopped aid in 1976. South Africa is also rumored to be a silent source of support. UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, Swiss-educated with a doctorate in political science, was Foreign Minister of FNLA from 1962-64. In 1964, he and 11 followers split from

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FNLA because they believed it was too Bakongo-oriented, and underwent nine months of guerrilla training in Peking before returning to Angola to fight the Portuguese.

When their joint enemy — the Portuguese — pulled out of Angola, Savimbi, Neto and Roberto signed a pact agreeing to hold elections immediately after independence. But the MPLA was unwilling to risk the test of the people's will, and in August 1975 they unleashed a mortar barrage on a compound where FNLA and UNITA cabinet ministers were housed. By independence day, MPLA —with the help of Cuban advisers — was in control of Luanda. FNLA was largely wiped out by Cuban troops and Soviet-supplied weapons and armor. Savimbi and his followers pulled back into the bush of southeast Angola and continue to wage a guerrilla war against MPLA and its foreign supporters.

It is currently estimated that there are 20,000-40,000 Cubans in Angola, propping up the government of Neto's successor, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. The dos Santos government controls one-third of the country; Savimbi controls one-third (in the south) and one-third is being disputed.

SOF correspondent Rick Venable is one of the few writers who have had the courage and been allowed to go into Cuando-Cubango Province to get an accurate view of the status of Angola's forgotten war.

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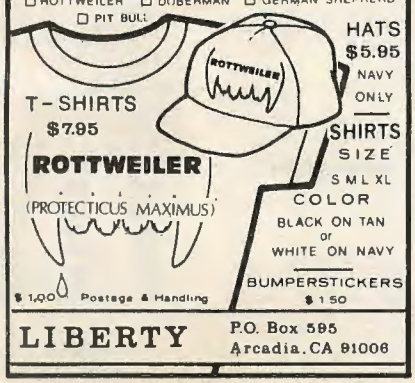

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FLAK

Continued from page 6

whom we knew as "Victor" had worked. The owner confirmed that "Victor" was "Bobby" and that the name used in the story, Nguyen van Nguyen (which I'd assumed was something like John McJohn and dismissed as editorial license), was correct.

When Victor-Bobby started working in the restaurant, he impressed those who knew him with his cheerfulness, energy and hard work (10-12 hours per day). He was even studying to be an electrician in his "free time." He managed to get his *nho* (little wife) and son out of Vietnam with him, and their sponsors had resettled them in Southampton on the east end of Long Island.

Things looked rosy for Victor, but I guess that a normal American life in a semirural setting was too tame for him. One day he disappeared, and most of us presumed that his wild hair (he did enjoy an afterwork drink on occasion) had gotten the best of him. When he showed back up several months later, no one believed his tales about training guerrillas or counterguerrillas in Nicaragua. Shortly thereafter, Victor took off once more, and was never again heard from.

At least now, some people believe his Nicaraguan tales.

Victor's wife has remarried, surprisingly to another refugee from communism — from Europe this time. They have two children — Victor's son and one of their own — and are living the life that Victor rejected.

My friend, the restaurant owner, took the copy of SOF over to Victor's wife's new husband, assuming rightly that this was the place to complete the story. Victor's wife had thought that she had been abandoned by a heartless bum. I don't know what her husband did with the article, but knowing him, I'm confident that someday, when he is old enough to understand its importance, "Bobby's" son will learn the full story of his real father, thanks in part to SOF. It's a lot better than thinking he was an irresponsible bum.

In this sense at least, maybe Buddha has blessed Bobby.

F.X. Egan
Woodbridge, Virginia

ANOTHER REMEMBRANCE. . .

Sirs:

I read with interest the letter in your

March '83 FLAK column from SFC Leigh F. Wade concerning "Bobby" Nguyen.

I was a Sergeant E-5 with CCN at Marble Mountain and later with B-52 Project Delta out of Nha Trang. I knew Bobby, and was at the base camp at Camp Eagle when he accidently shot his toe off. Bobby was a comical young man, but deadly serious in the field. I would have trusted him in any combat situation.

I remember that he always wanted to leave Vietnam and come to the United States. He said that he felt more at home with Americans than with Vietnamese.

I gather from the letter that Bobby is dead. The last time I heard the news of an old friend's death was in 1976 when I learned of George Bacon's death in Angola. I picked up the book *Merc: American Soldiers of Fortune* (by Jay Mallin and SOF Editor-Publisher Robert K. Brown) in the Anchorage airport and read the news of his death.

I was in Bacon's phase II class at Ft. Bragg and spent part of the night with him in a foxhole at CCN in Da Nang on 23 August 1968 when that camp was badly hit by Viet Cong and NVA.

Some of my war memories are bad, but I'll never forget the men with whom I served — men like Bobby and George Bacon. They'll always be close in my thoughts.

Terrance W. Pardee
Haines, Alaska

TELECARTRIDGE ECHNOLOGY ...

Sirs:

Your article on "Silent Shells," SOF, February '83, brings back many memories of AAI and associated Telecartridge projects. In those days I was associated with the Biological Warfare Laboratories at Fort Detrick, Maryland. My work was research and development on biological munitions.

We had several contracts with AAI, including a number of projects using Telecartridge technology. This work occurred between 1962 and 1968, preceding the Navy project you described. Because of our research use of the Telecartridge, most of the units' problems had been anticipated or discovered, facilitating the Navy's project.

I have in my possession five examples of Telecartridge construction, including one identical to your sample. I have no unfired rounds. Your sketch is essentially correct, except my shell does not have the holes in the outside shell as shown in your drawing.

Several other projects utilized Telecartridge technology, but these are possibly still classified. If Mr. Winn Barr and Robert Schnepfe could be contacted at AAI, you could get the whole story.

Gerald C. Yonetz
Frederick, Maryland.

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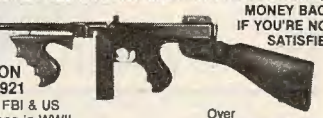

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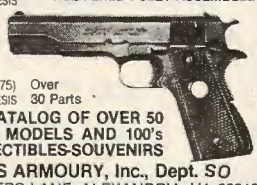

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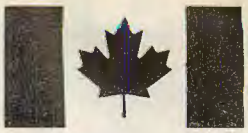

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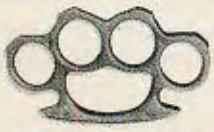
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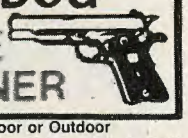
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Unfortunately, much of Telecartridge technology seems to be classified. SOF talked to the Navy and to Robert Schnepfe and got very little information. Though the Navy and Mr. Schnepfe were interested in our questions and very affable, they both informed us that direct discussion with the designers on either the Silent Shotgun Shell or the Telecartridge violated AAI's contract with the Navy.

The "holes" you mention in the shell casing are not holes at all, but a graphic device selected by SOF's art director to differentiate the shell's separate parts. — The Eds.

TREAD HEADS. . .

Sirs:

The men of the 1-73d Armor at Fort Irwin, Calif., would like to thank SOF for the Blue Force article ("Blue Force Blast," SOF, December '82). It really captured the way we train — no frills, no bullshit, but fun and challenging for each and every troop.

Only a pro like Pete Kokalis could put into words what this battalion does in training for both the OPFOR (Opposing Forces), and American missions.

We spend more time in the field fighting than any other four battalions in the Army. So if anyone wants to take Pete up on his offer to join this outfit, then they'd better be ready to do their job like it should be done — with long, hard and continuous work. You'll be part of a motorized rifle regimental attack, rolling across ditches and American defenses (both the good and the bad), and trying your damndest to kill every American in sight (with MILES of course). Sometimes winning, sometimes losing (more of the former than the latter), you'll get a professional high like you have never experienced. Oh, what a feeling: to be part of 150 attacking tanks and PCs. It's a feeling that scares the hell out of you, but keeps you coming back for more!

(Sound familiar?)

During his visit here, Pete was not too bad at the NCO Club. We only killed 2,000 or 3,000 VC, but after the 2nd PLF in formation, we had to put our flak jackets on.

Oh, by the way, in Korea, the M48A5s mount the M240 machine gun now. We look forward to SOF and Pete's return to the National Training Center.

SFC Rick Wagner
HHC, 1st Bn, 73d Armor
Fort Irwin, California

SUPPORT SOF ADVERTISERS

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 17

U.S. Nationals; the IPSC World Championships and the *Soldier of Fortune* Annual Three-Gun Match.

Complete details concerning the Bianchi Practical Shooting Support Program are available from Bianchi Gunleather, Attn: Competition Dept., Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390.

MERC WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA...

Soldier of Fortune has been informed that the South African Defense Forces are still accepting foreign volunteers on a very limited scale, contrary to an earlier report that foreign enlistments had been halted altogether (see Bulletin Board, SOF, December, '82).

All foreign personnel, currently about 28, are in 32 Battalion, a crackerjack infantry unit with an area of operation (AO) extending into Angola (see "Battles Beyond Angola's Border," SOF, May '82). Only three foreigners are still in 44 Parachute Brigade, which SWAPO propaganda portrayed as a mercenary-dominated, racist, blood-thirsty unit.

No foreigner will be accepted into the SADF unless he has a Permanent Residence Permit, which requires that the applicant be gainfully employed. And the SADF is no longer helping volunteers obtain these permits, as it once did. A tourist visa will still get you into South Africa, and ranch and mine security work is reported available for qualified applicants.

However, the SADF is interested only in people with military experience, and preferably some specialized skills. Merc work may still be available there, but South Africa is no mercenary's mecca.

U.S. ARMY SOLE SEARCHING...

Spit polishing may be a thing of the past for American GIs. The Army, in its latest attempt to replace the traditional black shiny boot, has come up with specifications for a dull-brown replacement that is rumored to resemble a Hush Puppy.

A "walk-off" is now being held to test 400 pairs of boots at Ft. Benning, Ga., 100 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and 200 at Twenty Nine Palms Marine Base, Calif. A previous

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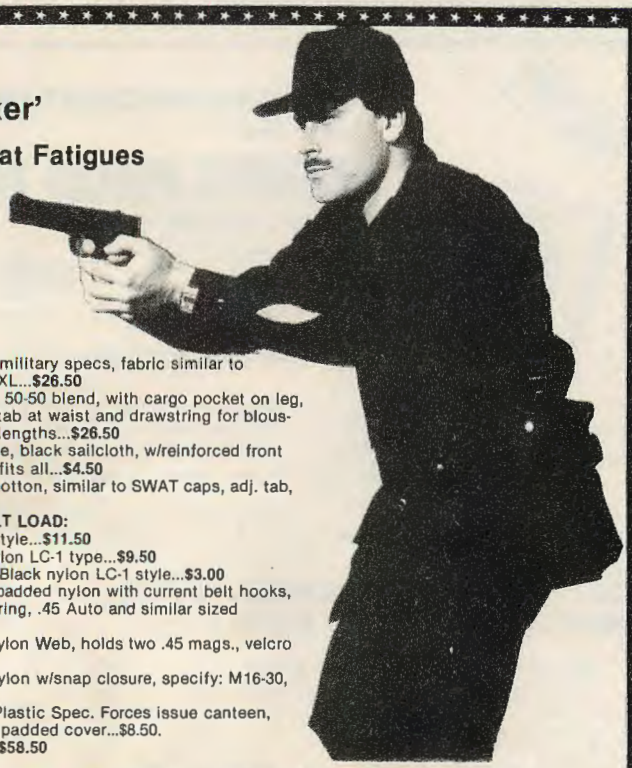

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walk-off failed to produce a winner when all the prototypes self-destructed during the test.

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ULTRA LOW PARACHUTING...

Koenig and Associates Aero Systems Research firm has just introduced a revolutionary new Ultra Low Level Parachute System, which permits live jumps to be made from 250 feet with a turn rate of four seconds for 180 degrees and an elapsed jump time of 17 seconds from an aircraft traveling 130 knots.

This is a breakthrough in parachute design which will provide more certain opening and insertion of jumpers well below enemy radar capability, thereby greatly enhancing survival in a hostile environment.

All jumps have resulted in stand-up landings for jumpers weighing 170-180 pounds.

The inventor of the system and president of Koenig and Associates, Christian Koenig, is a retired Vietnam vet, Master parachutist and winner of the Legion of Merit. For more information contact Koenig and Associates, Dept. SOF, 1845 Tara Drive, Prattville, AL 36067.

SANDINISTAN ATROCITIES...

In an exclusive interview with *Time* magazine, Roberto Guillen, former deputy chief of military counterintelligence for the Sandinistan Defense Ministry, gave lurid details of Sandinistan brutality against the Nicaraguan people which he observed before he defected in August 1982. Most shocking was the systematic killing of the Miskito Indians, who occupy northeast Zelaya.

Guillen was assigned to Zelaya Norte in April 1982 after he returned from counterintelligence school in Cuba. Soon, he began to discover the "barbarities being committed against the Miskitos." By reading defense reports, he learned of planned assaults against the Indians, which were later described by government spokesmen as defensive actions against Honduran counterrevolutionaries.

Guillen related one incident which he participated in during June 1982. The fire fight between government troops and Miskitos — although later

Continued on page 90

SOF CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

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CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Three Gun Match	5-7 October
Seminars & Films	6-9 October
Military Arms & Collector's Show	7-9 October
Rhodesian Jump & Air Assault School	6-7 October
Firepower Demonstration	8 October
Awards Ceremony	8 October

Rooms are available at $38 per room single or double occupancy at the HQ Hotel; the Sahara Hotel & Casino reservation line is 1 (800) 634-6666. Identify yourself as an SOF conventioneer.

Any additional convention questions or requests should be directed to:

Convention Director
P.O. Box 693
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Anyone wishing travel and group airfare information to convention can contact:
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THREE GUN MATCH: The world-famous Three Gun International Combat Shooting Match will be held at the Desert Sportsman Rifle & Pistol Club, 5-7 October. Entrance is by invitation only and competitors must write for application. This year 150 shooters will compete for $50,000 in cash and prizes. Cash prizes will be given for 1st through 15th place; gifts will reward 16th through 25th place finishers (based on overall score). Minor prizes include cash awards for top-score Police, Military, Middle Man and First Time SOF Shooter. Cash awards and prizes for top five places in individual rifle, pistol and shotgun competition will also be given. Shooters entry fee is $160, which also will include free entrance to all convention activities. All shooters wishing to bring a guest to the range must purchase a Range & Awards Ceremony Guest pass for $35. Passes are limited to ONE per shooter and must be purchased in advance since they will not be on sale at the Convention nor to the public. Transportation to the range will be provided for all conventioneers, shooters and guest. Shooters registration begins at 1200 hrs., Tuesday, 4 October in the Sahara Hotel Space Center Lobby.

CONVENTIONEERS: Pre-registration fee is $100. This provides free admission to all activities and events, and includes one Awards Ceremony ticket. All convention activities, with the exception of the Military Arms Collector's Show, are closed to the public. Pre-registration forms must be *postmarked no later than 25 September 1983.* You may pick up your convention schedule and badge anytime between 1200 hrs. 4 October and 1400 hrs. 8 October 1983 at the Sahara Hotel Space Center. Requests for refunds must also be *postmarked NLT 25 September 1983.* ALL CONVENTIONEERS MUST PRE-REGISTER.

PARACHUTE JUMP SCHOOL: This year the Albuquerque Parachute Center will host the Parachute Jump School, 6th and 7th October 1983. Captain John Early, formerly Officer Commanding of the Selous Scouts Airborne Strike Force and Chief HALO Instructor for the Rhodesian Security Forces, will be heading the airborne operations along with many former instructors of the Rhodesian Para School. Upon completion of the first jump course, jumpers will be dispatched on a simulated operational fire force airborne assault. The first jump course will be $120 per person. Cost for experienced jumpers will be $50. *All jumpers must pre-register as a Conventioneer.* Experienced jumpers must have a copy of current military orders placing them on jump status or a current log book showing that they have jumped within the past 90 days. Experienced jumpers are encouraged to bring their own gear for free-fall mass jumps. Interested persons must send their *jump fee* to: Albuquerque Parachute Center, 2326 Don Felipe S.W., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105; *Conventioneer fees* should be sent to: SOF Convention, Inc., P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

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Table rates are $75 per 6-foot table. Booth rates are $150 per 8x10-foot booth with 8-foot-high back-drape, 3-foot-high side rails and company identification sign. Exhibitors Service Kits will be sent to all booth buyers.

Room reservations may be made by calling the Sahara Hotel reservation line at 1 (800) 634-6666. Identify yourself as a Soldier of Fortune Convention Exhibitor. Room rates are $38 per single or double room.

Last year's SOF show featured 313 tables and booths. We will certainly exceed that in 1983. We urge you to reserve now. SEE YOU THERE!

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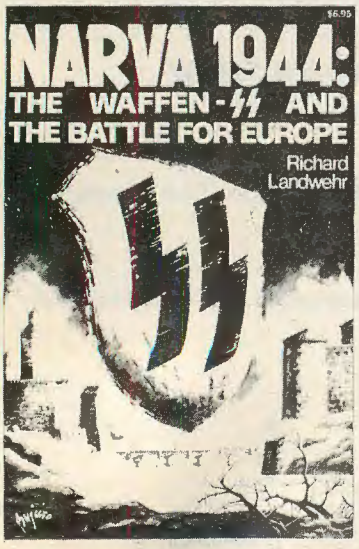

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BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 86

government reports said the troops were fighting former Somoza national guardsmen — resulted in 19 KIA and 22 WIA for the government troops and no casualties for the Indians. Following the skirmish, more than 800 Miskitos were rounded up and arrested

This action distressed Guillen, who had fought against Somoza for such injustices. The final straw came on 8 August when he was asked by government officials to plan and carry out the systematic executions of the 800 Miskitos. Guillen was to make it appear that the Indians had died in combat. Guillen said, "I practically went into a state of shock. They wanted me to provide soldiers to dig the graves, guards to control the Miskitos while they were being shot and trucks to transport them."

On 10 August, Guillen fled Nicaragua for Costa Rica to join Eden Pastora Gomez, a former Sandinistan hero who defected in 1981. Together they wait in their Costa Rican hideout for a chance to rid Nicaragua of the Sandinistan horror.

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CUBANS IN AFGHANISTAN?

Mujahideen rebels report that Russian troops have Cubans and Bulgarians in combat positions in Afghanistan. In the northern capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, the army base is called the *Qo'a-i-Bulgaria* — the Bulgarian Force. And in Badakhshan province black-skinned or full-bearded bodies left behind in November 1980 by the retreating Soviet forces are believed to be Cubans. Rumors of Soviet client-state presence, including Vietnam and some Warsaw Pact nations, have also come from the Panjshir Valley northeast of Kabul, a rebel stronghold.

Rebel sources claim that defectors from the Afghan Army have confirmed client-state participation. Former Afghan Air Force Col. Mohamed Sarwar Shinwari, who defected to Pakistan last November from Kabul, was quoted as saying that Cuban, Vietnamese, Hungarian and Bulgarian forces were helping the Russians. The former deputy commander of the Khad (Kabul's secret police), Lt. Gen. Ghulam Siddiq, reported seeing Czech and East German soldiers in Afghanistan, according to informed mujahideen spokesmen.

Despite the numerous claims by rebels, there has been no hard evidence to prove that the Soviets are using client states. Yet, the persistent rumors from widely diverse regions indicate that such is likely. What is needed is a smoking Bulgarian.

What is the mujahideen's attitude toward the foreign soldiers? "It makes no difference to us if they're Bulgarians, Russians, Cubans or whatever — they're invaders," one rebel officer was quoted as saying recently in *Asiaweek* magazine.

GREAT LEAP BACKWARD...

The Russian AGS-17 is more deadly than we originally thought ... to the operator, that is.

SOF Military Small Arms Editor, Peter Kokalis, approached the Russian grenade launcher with caution when he tested it in Darra Adam Khel, Pakistan, last year (see "Raiders of the Lost Grenade Launcher," SOF, February '83) because he distrusted the design. Western intelligence sources now say there was good reason for his anxiety: The Russian grenades are fused by an archaic setback device that hasn't been seen in Western weaponry for several decades.

Most propelled grenades and artillery shells are fused by spin-arming, where the projectile is armed by centrifugally spinning elements that work like a combination lock, making it

nearly impossible to detonate the explosive, except by shooting it a minimum distance from a rifled barrel. The simpler set-back mechanism arms the detonator at the first shock, whether it be from impact of propellant gasses or from being dropped accidentally.

Firing a spin-armed grenade through an obstructed bore usually will result in a deformed barrel. Firing a set-back-armed projectile probably will turn the barrel into shrapnel.

CANADIANS CONFIRM SOVIET TOXINS. . .

When Dr. Bruno Schiefer, a trichothecene specialist at the University of Saskatchewan, went to Southeast Asia last year as part of a Canadian scientific team to investigate charges of Soviet use of chemical and biological gasses on villagers, he was skeptical. After visiting areas of Laos, Cambodia and Thailand that reported chemical gassings, Schiefer returned, a firm believer.

Schiefer, who has studied trichothecene fungi for 10 years because of its effect on Canadian livestock, observed the same type of effects on the villagers as on the cattle exposed to tricothecene: skin lesions, vomiting, convulsions, internal bleeding, blurred vision and a blocked immunity system. "All of these point to use of toxins produced by trichothecene fungi, which are common to the Soviet Union," says Schiefer.

The chemicals being used to spray Southeast Asia do not occur naturally there, but they do resemble the cold-weather species found in the Soviet Union.

The report of Schiefer and his other team members concluded that "yellow rain" is being used in Southeast Asia, and based on this, Canada is urging the strengthening of the 1925 Geneva protocols that outlaw chemical and biological warfare.

In an effort to better understand the effects of Soviet-administered toxins, Schiefer has begun simulating the effects on mice in his laboratory. Still unknown are the residual byproducts; the length of time between exposure and illness; and how to determine conclusively that deaths resulted from toxin exposure rather than other causes.

CONTINUE AID TO EL SALVADOR. . .

The Heritage Foundation's Latin American analyst, Richard Araujo, recently warned Congress that ending aid to El Salvador "would jeopardize the notable progress that has already been made in the strife-torn country."

Only by maintaining aid to El Salvador, Araujo contended, can the United States have the leverage to bring about the necessary reforms in that country. One of the main reforms being sought is an end to the human-rights violations that traditionally have plagued most Central American countries. "While human rights violations continue in El Salvador," Araujo admitted, "they are decreasing; progress, though slow, is being achieved in this critical sector."

Although the United States must continue to pressure for an end to these violations, cutting off aid now, after significant steps have been taken by the Salvadoran government, is not the answer. Araujo suggested to Congress the following actions to speed up El Salvador's progress: 1) Encourage short-term loans from private institutions to revitalize industry and provide jobs; 2) Approve Caribbean Basin Initiative that would create markets for Salvadoran products, making El Salvador less economically dependent on the United States; 3) Support the Salvadoran government in the development of an effective judicial system, and agrarian and economic reform program; 4) Encourage the scheduled elections of 1984 so the Salvadorans themselves can judge the performance of the current government leaders and 6) Continue to assist in training government military forces, and to provide technical and advisory help because of the increasing guerrilla terrorist attacks on transportation and communication facilities.

"As the most visible champion of democracy, the U.S. must recognize the steady progress of this Latin American neighbor and provide real support for the electoral process, the means by which all Salvadorans can be allowed to choose their destiny," the Heritage Foundation expert concluded.

SPECIAL FORCES EXPANDED. . .

By the end of 1983, the U.S. Army will have nine Special Forces Groups (SFG) instead of the existing seven. This will give the United States a larger and more effective non-conventional, counterguerrilla capability, particularly in jungle settings such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. . . .

The two new Special Forces units — the 1st Special Forces Group at Ft. Lewis, Wash. and the 3rd Bn-7th Panamanian SFG, which will be assumed by the soon-to-be-reactivated 8th SFG — will join the existing three active and four reserve SFGs. The active units are: the 5th and 7th SFGs at Ft. Bragg, N.C.; and the 10th SFGs at Ft. Lewis, Wash., and Bad Tolz, Germany. The National Guard and Reserve components are: 11th and 12th SFGs (National Guard) and 19th and 20th SFGs (Reserve).

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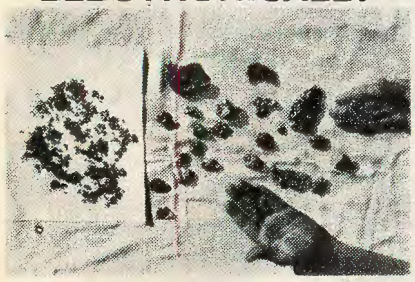

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The Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife was chosen for this memorial tribute because it was the knife carried by the S.A.S. Commandos in machine-gun festooned Jeeps against the "Desert Fox" in 1941, and it is still issued to the S.A.S. today. It is one of the most famous, highly sought-after knives in the world — and an appropriate symbol of the S.A.S.

Knife No. 1 of this limited edition has been officially presented to the S.A.S. Regimental Commander at a formal ceremony at their Headquarters, outside of Hereford, England. Only 999 more will be made. Then the edition will be closed forever.

Four Special Features

Four features of this knife add to its importance — and to its value as a highly prized military collectible. First, the entire 12-inch knife — not just the hilt — is richly plated with 24-karat gold. This is the *first* commemorative knife known to be totally overlaid with pure gold.

Second, the grip is a special design. It was created to be authentic, yet to symbolize more than 40 years of service by the S.A.S. The overall dimensions and the brass material are identical to the long-hilted checkered grip originally issued to the S.A.S. in North Africa. However, the center portion incorporates the "ribbed" design of the present-issue knife carried by the S.A.S. This is another first — which will add further importance to this tribute.

Third, the top nut will be of special interest to Fairbairn-Sykes collectors. It is solid at the top — rather than bored through — giving a more finished appearance. This is possible because the special shouldered design extends well into the grip itself. This is the first time that this design top nut has ever been made with an F-S Fighting Knife.

Fourth – and possibly most important — this is the *first* commemorative of any type ever issued to honor the S.A.S.

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On the blade reverse are etched the winged-dagger beret flash bearing the S.A.S. motto "Who Dares Wins," and the name of the regiment. The blade is of the finest quality; it is forged, hardened, tempered and mirror polished to the original wartime specifications from the finest, high carbon steel before it is richly plated with 24-karat gold.

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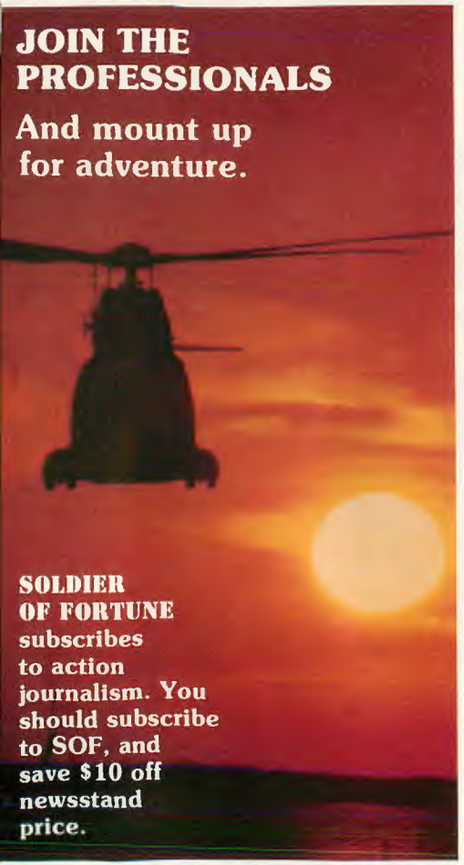

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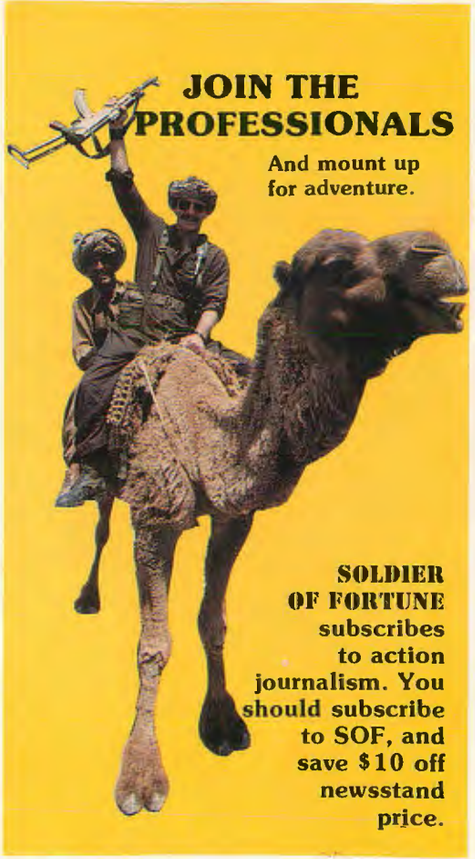

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